

**Univerzita Karlova**

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Ústav anglického jazyka a didaktiky



# **Diplomová práce**

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## **Practicum in Training Teachers of EFL**

Pedagogické praxe v přípravě angličtinářů

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### **Prohlášení**

Prohlašuji, že jsem tuto diplomovou práci vypracoval samostatně a výhradně s použitím citovaných pramenů, literatury a dalších odborných zdrojů.

V Praze, dne

.....

Jan Pospíšil

## **Poděkování**

Rád bych poděkoval PhDr. Tomáši Gráfovi, Ph.D. za ochotu, cenné rady a připomínky, které mi při vypracování mé diplomové práce poskytl.

**Klíčová slova:**

Výuka anglického jazyka, souvislá pedagogická praxe, průběžná pedagogická praxe  
mnohonásobná případová studie, fakultní učitelé, pedagogické praxe ve Finsku, Německu a  
Belgii

**Abstrakt**

Tato diplomová práce se zabývá problematikou pedagogických praxí a její rolí v praktické přípravě učitelů anglického jazyka. Práce pojímá pedagogickou praxi z pohledu didaktiky, tedy jako nástroj používaný za účelem připravit učitele na jejich budoucí kariéru. Teoretická část rozebírá, na základě sekundární literatury, jakou roli povinná pedagogická praxe hraje a jací účastníci do ní vstupují. Dále představuje modely praktické přípravy učitelů používané ve Finsku, Německu a Belgii. Na základě tohoto popisu jsou předloženy návrhy pro zvýšení efektivity povinné pedagogické praxe v rámci programu celoživotního vzdělávání.

V empirické části se práce zaměřuje na to, jak svou praktickou přípravu hodnotí začínající učitelé. Základem výzkumu jsou případové studie pěti začínajících učitelů připravovaných na Filozofické fakultě Karlovy univerzity a jedné začínající učitelky připravované na Pedagogické fakultě Jihočeské univerzity. Cílem výzkumu bylo na základě polostrukturovaných rozhovorů zjistit, jak začínající učitelé hodnotí praxi a zda je připravila pro začátek jejich budoucí kariéry. Výsledky výzkumu naznačují, že příprava učitelů anglického jazyka připravovaných v rámci programu celoživotního vzdělávání je nedostatečná. Mezi hlavní nedostatky současného modelu praktické přípravy patří její délka, nedostatek zpětné vazby, neadekvátní vedení fakultních učitelů či nedostatek náslechu.

**Keywords:**

English language teaching, teaching practicum, qualitative research, multiple case study, faculty teachers, teaching practicum in Finland, Belgium, and Germany

**Abstract**

This thesis focuses on the topic of teaching practicum in training teachers of EFL. The practicum is regarded as a complex didactic tool realized for a specific purpose with a specific aim. The theoretical part of the thesis presents the concept of practicum and the role of its participants. Furthermore, it presents the practicum models used in Finland, Germany and Belgium. Based on secondary literature and on the description of the practicum models used in the selected countries, the theoretical part proposes recommendations for enhancing the efficiency of practical training within the lifelong learning programme.

The aim of the empirical part of this thesis is to find out how novice teachers evaluate their practical training and the beginning of their teaching career. The research is based on five case studies of teachers educated at the Faculty of Arts at Charles University and one case study of a teacher educated at the Faculty of Education at the University of South Bohemia. Semi-structured interviews were conducted to find out whether the novice teachers felt sufficiently prepared for their career and whether they consider the practicum model efficient. The research findings suggest that the practicum model used within the lifelong learning programme is inadequate and does not sufficiently prepare teachers for their future career.

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## **1 Introduction**

Language proficiency and experience are indispensable for every teacher of English. While acquisition of the former is exhaustively attended to over the span of many years, the latter receives much less attention and in some cases is only secured by a two-week-long practicum. It is usually complemented by the novice teacher's individual extra-curricular efforts such as teaching in language schools or offering individual lessons.

Over the past century, TEFL has experienced a shift from the theoretical to the practical. It turned from theoretical instruction through sentence translation and memorizing paradigms towards the practice of communication. It was Chomsky's theory of linguistic competence and Hymes's concept of communicative competence that inspired the change from drills and translation exercises to communication-oriented instruction and actual language usage. On a general level, it was recognized that people learn through practice more effectively than they do through theory. Recent approaches to teacher training reflect that in that they put emphasis on incorporating practical training into teacher preparation programmes. Yet there is striking imbalance between the length of the theoretical and practical training in the preparation of teachers of EFL.

This is not the case for teachers of EFL in the entire world. The following chapters include an outline of practicum models used in several European countries. The countries selected include Germany, Belgium, Finland, and the Czech Republic. The countries were selected as they are generally known and respected for their good education system. In the beginning of the twenty-first century, Finland became the center of attention of most education researchers. It started appearing consistently among the top European countries in the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) conducted by the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD)<sup>1</sup>. In the latest assessment from 2015, Germany scored fifth and Belgium ninth of all European countries. Although PISA only tests pupils in reading, mathematics, and science, the results have been consistent enough for us to assume, that those countries have an education system that is above the European average. Teacher training in Finland consists of both theoretical and practical education. A teacher needs to have acquired

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<sup>1</sup> For results see <http://www.oecd-ilibrary.org>

an advanced degree in a relevant university programme, which includes 60 ECTS credits of pedagogical studies. Second, they need to have completed practical training of at least 20 ECTS credits which amounts to 600 hours of practical experience (European Commission, 1995-2017)<sup>2</sup>. In Germany, the aspiring teacher is obliged to finish their academic studies and then undergo a process called *Vorbereitungsdienst* – a practical training process lasting one or two years, which begins with introductory seminars, covers observations, accompanied teaching, and training in seminar events and concludes with independent teaching.

In both Germany and Finland, the practical training process is long and aspiring teachers gradually get accustomed to the school environment and teaching process. In the Czech Republic, the practicum process differs for each faculty. While faculties of education usually require students to undergo three semesters of practical training, graduates of other faculties undergoing practical training within the lifelong learning programme must attend only one period of practicum.

It is the aim of this thesis to compare different models of practicum and contrast them with the experience of novice teachers with educational background in the English philology study programme at Charles University. The following chapters provide more details on the practicum models in the Czech Republic, Finland, Germany, and Belgium. The third section of the thesis shows an analysis of semi-structured interviews with novice teachers and in the conclusion several recommendations are proposed, based on the comparison with other countries, which might improve the current teacher training process.

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<sup>2</sup> Eurydice, Web, June 24, 2017  
[https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/fpfis/mwikis/eurydice/index.php/Finland:Initial Education for Teachers Working in Early Childhood and School Education](https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/fpfis/mwikis/eurydice/index.php/Finland:Initial_Education_for_Teachers_Working_in_Early_Childhood_and_School_Education)



## **2 Theoretical Background**

This chapter is centered around practicum and its role in teacher training. It includes a description of the teaching practicum in general – its aims, organization, and role of its participants, which is followed by a description of the teaching practicum models used in the selected countries. However, to ensure that the reader is familiar with the countries' educational background which is referred to in the description of practicum models, the chapters on Finland, Germany, and Belgium start with a brief introduction into the structure of the education system.

The description is based on secondary literature and on the Eurydice project. Eurydice is a database created by the European Commission to document and explain how education systems are organized in Europe and how they work. The database includes information on early childhood education and care, primary and secondary education, higher education and adult learning as well as on the training of teachers and academic staff.

Since teaching EFL involves both primary and secondary school levels, the thesis refers to teacher training at both levels of education. Though there may be some pre-school educational institutions where English is spoken, pre-school education is not included.

### **2.1 The teaching practicum**

The teaching practicum is a necessary part of any education programme for teachers and includes many conceptual, methodological, and organizational issues (Mazáčová: 9)<sup>3</sup>. Its aim is to connect theoretical with practical instruction, while introducing the student to real school environment. It provides students with an opportunity to apply the acquired theoretical knowledge in practice and thus develop their competence as teachers in its entirety (ibid.).

Above all, practicum is a complex didactic tool realized for a specific purpose with a specific aim. The aim is to train competent and efficient teachers and to prepare them sufficiently for the imminent start of their teaching career. However, when designing an efficient teacher training model, one first needs to understand the nature of teacher knowledge and how it is

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<sup>3</sup> [http://uprps.pedf.cuni.cz/UPRPS-353-version1-pedagogicka\\_praxe.pdf](http://uprps.pedf.cuni.cz/UPRPS-353-version1-pedagogicka_praxe.pdf)

acquired – i.e. teacher learning. Richards and Farrell (2005) outlined four perspectives on teacher learning:

1) Teacher learning as skill learning.

This perspective perceives teacher learning as the development of a set of different skills, the mastery of which underlies successful teaching. Therefore, teaching can be broken down into discrete skills that can be mastered one at a time. Such skills include e.g. questioning, giving explanations, or presenting new language. This implies that practical training should be centered around presenting and modelling the skills and providing opportunities for trainees to master them (p. 6).

2) Teacher learning as a cognitive process.

This educational philosophy emphasizes that the teachers' learning is influenced by the nature of their beliefs and thinking. Teacher trainees are encouraged to explore their own thinking processes and how they influence their classroom practice using techniques such as journal writing, analysis of critical incidents, or self-monitoring (ibid.).

3) teacher learning as personal construction

This approach highlights that knowledge is actively constructed by learners and not passively received. In teacher education, this meant emphasizing the teachers' contributions to learning and the development of self-awareness and personal interpretation through activities such as journal writing and self-monitoring (p. 7).

4) teacher learning as reflective practice.

This view of learning is based on the assumption that teachers learn from experience through focused reflection on the nature and meaning of teaching experiences (Schon 1983; Wallace 1991; Richards & Lockhart, 1994 as cited in Richards and Farrel, 2005: 7). It sees reflection as a process of critical examination of experiences, which can lead to better understanding of one's own teaching practice. Reflective teaching is accompanied by collecting information on one's own teaching using journals, portfolio work, case studies, or self-monitoring (p. 7). The

reflective approach is emphasized by most current perspectives on practicum. It stresses leading the student to reflect on their own performance and on the performance of others, through which they can learn and develop their own identity as teachers. The teacher contemplates their own work, they question the decisions they made while teaching and think about whether those decisions were right or wrong. Frequently used methods of reflection also include self-questioning, peer observation (with subsequent discussion), videotaping, interviews with pupils, keeping a teacher's diary and keeping a teaching portfolio (Mazáčová: 53).

It is important to note that the approaches listed above are not mutually exclusive and that all of them contribute in varying degree to the overall process of practical teacher training.

The practicum is an intricate process which includes the following participants – the trainee's university represented by the practicum supervisor, the faculty school where practicum is conducted represented by the faculty teacher mentoring the trainee, the trainee (pre-service teacher), other fellow trainees and time. The following paragraphs discuss the influence of the participants on the practicum experience.

### **2.1.1 The faculty teacher**

The practicum is commonly conducted at faculty schools or a school of the students' choice under the supervision of experienced faculty teachers. The faculty teacher guides the trainee through the entire practicum experience, which includes providing information on the school's education process and specificities of the taught subjects, introducing the trainee to time schedule and material, familiarizing the trainee with the school's premises, allowing the trainee to observe the teacher's lessons, observing all lessons taught by the trainee, provide regular and thorough feedback on the trainee's performance and handing in an evaluation of the student's performance to a faculty representative (Mazáčová: 12).

The faculty teacher assumes a large part of the responsibility for the education of pre-service teachers in practicum. They serve as model teachers, provide feedback on the trainee's performance and are responsible for the overall evaluation at the end of the practicum. All of these duties shape in a significant manner the trainees' understanding of teaching and of what is going to be expected from them as teachers. Freeman (1989) describes the process of

educating preservice teachers as a collaborative effort towards a shared purpose, which is to generate some form of change in the teacher. Freeman then outlines four main points of how the faculty teacher (in Freeman's terms collaborator) may contribute to this change (p.38).

First, change does not necessarily mean to do something in a different way, it might be a change in awareness and thus an affirmation of the current practice. By focusing the trainee's attention on a certain aspect of teaching, the collaborator is able to trigger a change in the trainee's awareness. Second, the change is not immediate or complete, some changes occur over time, and the collaborator only initiates the process (ibid.). Therefore, since the faculty teacher is able to exert most influence on the trainee, their responsibility is to impart upon the trainee such beliefs and perspectives on teaching that will positively influence the quality of their teaching in the future. This is directly related to the third point, which is that while some changes (such as the number of techniques used) are directly observable, others (such as the trainee's attitudes) are not (ibid.) At this point, it is important to highlight the perspective of teacher learning as a reflective practice. Reflection on the trainee's performance not only helps the trainee to form opinions on their teaching, but also helps the faculty teacher to assess the trainee's internal processes. The fourth point is that observable changes are finite while others are open-ended. For example, the trainee will use only a limited number of corrective techniques, but the faculty teacher may suggest that the teacher increase, decrease, or modifies any of these techniques, which triggers an open-ended change – the desire to continue to explore new correction techniques (ibid.).

### **2.1.2 The practicum supervisor and reflective techniques**

The practicum supervisor is a representative of the trainee's university who is entitled to request specific activities from the trainee and thus influence the practicum's structure. The practicum supervisor may observe the trainee's performance and provide more feedback on the trainee's performance together with the faculty teacher. The practicum supervisor enters the teacher education process as a consultant rather than as direct teacher educator with activities such as keeping a teacher's journal or a teaching portfolio.

A teaching journal is an ongoing written account of observations, reflections, and other thoughts about teaching, usually in the form of a notebook, book, or electronic mode, which serves as a source of discussion, reflection or evaluation (Richards and Farrel 2005: 68).

Without such a record, the teacher often has no substantial recollection of what happened during a lesson and cannot use the experience of successful or unsuccessful teaching as a source for further learning (p. 69). The practicum supervisor is responsible for providing sufficient and useful instruction in journal writing and should oversee that the trainee profits from this reflective technique as much as possible. For supervisors, reading and responding to a teacher's journal can serve as means of encouraging reflective inquiry, which can facilitate resolving problems and concerns (p.70). When responding to the trainee's journal, the practicum supervisor should make use of the following types of responses:

- a) Affective and personalized comments – establish rapport with the trainee, provide encouragement, which reduces the feeling of anxiety (e.g. *What an interesting idea!*).
- b) Direct response to questions – sometimes the trainees might want a direct reply to a question because they need to solve a particular problem or dilemma. The supervisor should praise the student for asking a good question and then propose how they would go about solving the dilemma (e.g. *What an interesting question. I usually focus on...*).
- c) Exploratory suggestions – help the trainee explore in more depth their own teaching (e.g. *I like that you make students write drafts of their assignments. What other aspects of writing should students focus on? Is it grammar?*)
- d) Synthesis comments and questions – these comments are important because they highlight links that may not have been clear earlier. They also help the teacher to understand previous comments better. (e.g. *In your first entry you wrote that you want your students to talk to each other in English more and now you write that they do. What do you think caused this turnaround?*)
- e) Unsolicited comments and questions – help focus on an issue that the trainee avoids. (e.g. *Earlier you wrote about conversation classes but you did not include any comments on why your students might be reluctant to respond to your questions? I would also like to know...*) (p. 73-75).

A teaching portfolio is a collection of documents and other items that provides information about different aspects of a teacher's work (p. 109). While the teaching portfolio is a technique used mostly for self-reflection and professional development, the practicum supervisor is responsible for ensuring that the trainee masters this technique. Since teaching portfolio is now frequently used at job interviews as evidence of the standard of the teacher's performance, it is imperative that the trainee gains sufficient command of the technique. The

trainee should be taught to differentiate between a working portfolio and a showcase portfolio. A working portfolio is designed as evidence that the teacher is moving towards a particular goal that was set for them by the teacher themselves or by someone else (e.g. the school head). Such portfolio should contain only material relevant to this purpose. A showcase portfolio contains items that manifest the teacher's depth of skill. It can be submitted as a part of an appraisal or included in an application for a new teaching position (p. 100). The actual content of the portfolio depends on the purpose and audience for which it is meant but may include lesson plans, anecdotal records, student projects, videotapes, teacher evaluations, and letters of recommendation (p. 103). As this reflective technique is essential not only for an effective practicum, but also throughout the trainee's future career, the teaching practicum should leave the trainee with sufficient command of portfolio work.

### **2.1.3 Other trainees – the role of collaborative teaching in the teaching practicum**

As shown in chapter 2.3.3, some practicum models, particularly in training primary school teachers, currently include collaborative teaching, i.e. the trainees experience the teaching practicum in groups of two or more trainees. Collaboration gives the trainees an opportunity for heightened reflection. The need to synchronize teaching acts requires team teachers to negotiate and discuss their thoughts, values and actions in ways that solo teachers do not encounter. The process of explaining one's ideas and actions to another teacher forces team teachers to refine their thoughts and reflect on their performance (Knezevic and Scholl in Freeman and Richards 2002: 79). Since one of the goals of the teaching practicum is to lead the trainees to develop an independent teacher identity, it might seem counterproductive to employ this technique as team teachers share responsibilities that are normally assumed by a single teacher. However, thanks to the highly reflective nature, collaborative teaching is a useful tool for the early periods of practicum, when independent teaching is not yet expected from the trainees.

Knezevic and Scholl also describe the positive influence of collaborative teaching on learning lesson planning. "The potential for creative thinking in collaborative planning was exciting because the joint product was greater than what we might have created individually. We each grew to appreciate the imaginative capabilities of the other as we bounced ideas back and forth" (p. 82). What needs to be emphasized, however, is that the impact of collaborative

teaching on the trainee's lesson planning skills stems from the fact that the trainees planned lessons together and did not split responsibilities for individual planning.

Collaborative teaching impacts not only lesson planning but, through frequent peer-observations, the entire process of the practicum. It provides the trainees with an opportunity to observe all performances of fellow trainees and to reflect on them both implicitly and explicitly. Knezevic and Scholl add that within the classroom, teachers are an invaluable resource for one another. We watched each other closely and considered one another's classroom behavior both consciously and subconsciously. Collaborative teachers give one another reinforcement and feedback (p. 88).

Peer observation can meet with an ambivalent response from the side of teacher trainees because observation tends to be identified with evaluation. Trainee's might experience feelings of anxiety or embarrassment when performing in front of others. To mitigate these negative emotions, peer observations should be implemented only after the particular group of trainees have become familiar with each other and thus start to feel more comfortable teaching in front of each other. However, when observation is successfully separated from evaluation, peer observation can become a tool for teacher development. Observations are mutually beneficial as the observer might discover that a colleague has effective teaching strategies that the observer has never tried. Observing another teacher may also trigger reflections about one's own teaching. For the teacher being observed, the observer can provide an "objective" view of the lesson and can collect information about the lesson that the teacher might not otherwise be able to gather. By implementing peer observation in the teaching practicum, the trainees are provided with a chance to see how other teachers cope with timing, classroom language, the pupils' participation or what activities and questioning techniques they make use of.

Supervisors and administrators have an important role to play when implementing and encouraging peer observation. They should communicate with the teachers to find out what kind of support they might need for classroom observations, make sure that all trainees are familiar with the procedure of peer observations, and encourage trainees to report on the performance of their colleagues after a series of observations. (Richards and Farrel 2005).

#### **2.1.4 The trainee - Experiencing the practicum**

While there are certainly cases where practicum trainees have already acquired some teaching experience (e.g. in language schools, company language courses or as part-time teachers), the practicum is presumed to be their first exposure to a realistic experience of being a teacher with all it subsumes. “The practicum is the major opportunity for the student teacher to acquire the practical skills and knowledge needed to function as an effective language teacher” (Richards and Crookes 1988: 9). For the first time, the teacher assumes all responsibilities of a teacher such as lesson planning, lesson delivery, classroom management, and identity development. This raises the problem of whether the trainees entering the practicum are or are not perceived as novice teachers. While some argue that students become novice teachers no sooner than with their first full-time teaching position, others assert that a novice teacher is anyone teaching a new course for the first time. For the purposes of this thesis, novice teachers are considered to be teachers who have finished their education and have not gained more than three years of experience after they have acquired their Master’s degree. Based on Farrell (2007 and 2012), this chapter describes the experience of the teaching practicum from the side of the teacher trainee.

Veenman (1984 as cited in Farrell 2012) described the experience of being a novice teacher as a “reality shock” because of “the collapse of the missionary ideals formed during teacher training by the harsh and rude reality of classroom life” (p. 437). What is worse, novice teachers have not one, but two complex tasks during this period – teaching effectively and learning to teach (Wildman, Niles, Magliaro, & McLaughlin 1989 as cited in Farrell 2012: 438).

It is imperative that the trainees experience the reality shock during the teaching practicum, when they have other practicum participants (the practicum supervisor and the faculty teacher) at their disposal, who can support them and guide them through this unpleasant experience. Should this reality shock be omitted in the practicum process, the trainee will experience it alone at the beginning of their professional career, which might enhance the chances of early occupational burnout. Kuzmic (1993 as cited in Farrell 2012) adds that the resulting distress is compounded by the isolation novice teachers may feel as they are often left alone to carry out their duties without any immediate support.



Based on Zitlow (1986) and Cole & Knowles (1993), Farrell (2007) asserts that novice language teachers are in many cases surprised that the classroom context, where they were posted for teaching practice was very different from their own experiences as students, and thus they had difficulty adjusting to their new teaching environments. As a result of that, trainees might be shattered by exposure to certain realities of schools, classrooms, and teaching (p. 194). In a case study of a Singapore student taking a re practicum course after she had failed her first one, Farrell (2007) explains that through intense reflection on the influence of the trainee's past teachers, the trainee is able to step out of their shadow and develop their own teacher identity.

### **2.1.5 Time – Length of the teaching practicum**

The issue of how long a practicum should last is related to the concept of “reality shock” mentioned above. The research on this topic mentions no exact ideal practicum length since each trainee might experience it differently. Another important issue related to practicum length is that teacher educators often assume that all novice teachers must do is apply the knowledge they accumulated during their teacher preparation programs and all will be well (Farrell 2012: 441). Richards (1998 as cited in Farrell 2012) comments that teachers do not translate the knowledge they obtain from their SLT preparation courses into practice automatically, because teachers must construct and reconstruct “new knowledge and theory through participating in specific contexts and engaging in particular types of activities and processes” (p. 441). What is to be noted from that is that novice teachers must be given sufficient amount of time to grow accustomed to their newly acquired teacher role. The amount of time may vary for each trainee and, therefore, teacher educators should lead the trainee to reflect extensively, to make sure that enough time has been given to them.

When considering the notion of time in practicum, the developmental nature of teacher learning needs to be emphasized. Stoyanoff (1999) further describes a practicum model used at the Oregon State University based on the following characteristics:

- a) The practicum is integrated into an academic program lasting 12 months and starts already in the first month

- b) The delivery of the practicum emphasizes cooperation among the mentor teachers, academic advisors, course coordinators, and the practicum students. Each member is involved in every phase of the practicum process
- c) The practicum provides intensive modeling and coaching. Mentor teachers spend an average of 5 hours per week working with student.
- d) The practicum is assessed by means of a portfolio. Prepared by the students, the portfolio documents their cumulative development over the yearlong experience and is shared with academic advisor before the end of the practicum (Stoynoff: 147).

While there are some limitations arising from this approach such as cost of time and money, the recurrent intensity of the mentoring experience on the mentor teachers, or the high degree of coordination and cooperation between all participants, this approach highlights significant characteristics that any practicum could benefit from. First, it stresses the long-term developmental nature of learning to teach (Stoynoff: 148). The prolonged practicum experience places less demands on teacher trainees enabling them to gradually get accustomed to the education process and assume responsibilities of a teacher in a progressive manner.

#### **2.1.6 Variations of the teaching practicum**

It follows from the developmental nature of teacher learning described above that practicum should be a gradual process and, therefore, different types of practicum should be distinguished. Those include the assistant practicum, the observation practicum, the basic practicum and the advanced practicum. The practicum types differ in the activities expected from the trainees, amount of responsibilities they have to assume, and the degree of independence the trainees are given. Frequent reflection should accompany all types of the teaching practicum.

The assistant practicum is commonly the first stage of the practical training process. The aim of this practicum is to familiarize students with the school environment and to give the trainees a chance to better understand what is going to be expected from them at later stages. The students assist the teacher with lesson planning, attend staff meetings, assist with class field trips (where relevant), and observe the faculty teacher's lessons. At this point, reflection should focus on the trainee's understanding of teaching, while encouraging them to question

the faculty teacher's performance. This is done so that they start developing their own perspective on teaching instead of mere copying the model teacher's performance.

During the observation practicum, trainees usually observe lessons in their subjects in groups and are led to reflect on the teacher's performance. It is different from the assistant practicum in that the trainees focus solely on the model teacher's performance that they are encouraged to reflect upon. The observation practicum is of particular importance when the trainees are able to observe the class that they are later going to teach. In this way, they are introduced to the culture of the class and they can evaluate the student-teacher relationship maintained in that particular class.

The basic practicum is when teachers first assume the role of the teacher in front of the class. By this time, they should have already become familiar with the class and they should have a clear picture of what materials they should include in their lessons. At this point, the trainees should be provided with most support so that they become confident about their performance. Throughout the basic practicum the trainees are given more responsibilities, but are not yet given complete independence.

The advanced practicum is designed to prepare the trainees for independent teaching in their future career. The advanced practicum is the final stage where the trainees should already have started to develop their own teacher identity. At this point, reflection should focus on the development of the trainee's performance. Teacher educators should make sure that the trainees leave the advanced practicum with knowledge about the importance of self-development in the teacher's career.

## **2.2 Finland**

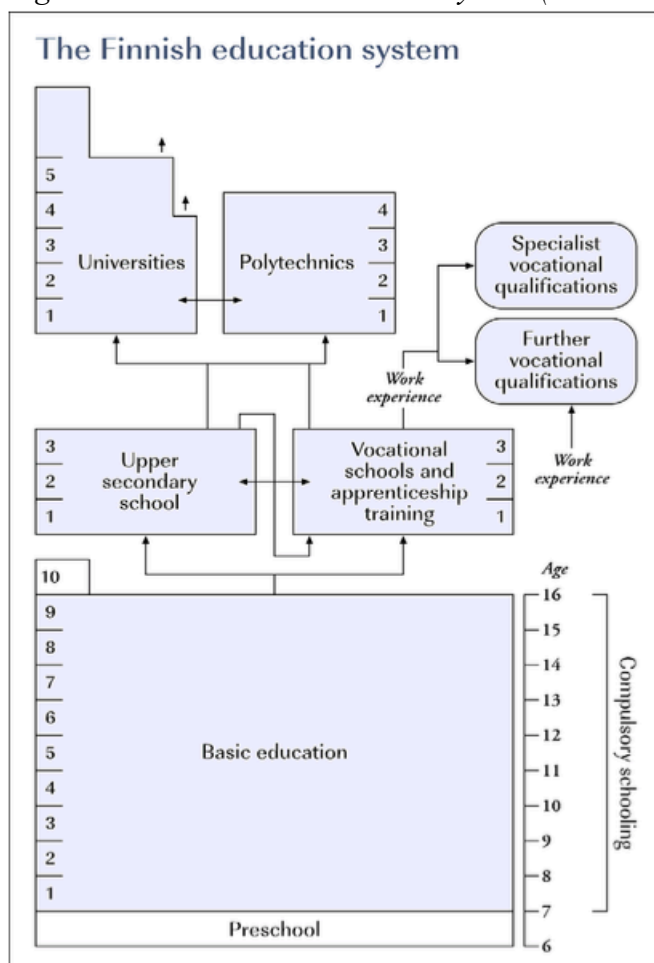
Finland has now been looked up to for its education system for more than a decade. The trend began at the beginning of this century, when in 2001 and again in 2003 Finland scored surprisingly high in the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) – an examination overseen by the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). Thorough research has since then been done into the reasons for this dramatic improvement in the level of Finnish education system. This chapter comments shortly on the Finnish education system as there are some country-specific implication for teachers such as

unified system of education or the range of grades taught by class and subject teachers. However, the chapter focuses mostly on the teacher training process including the model of the teaching practicum. Pupils in Finland make their first language choice in the third grade, which is why the chapter includes both class teacher and subject teacher training.

### 2.2.2 System of education in Finland

Figure 2 demonstrates that the education system in Finland consists of three levels. First, pupils need to go through nine years of compulsory education. Subsequently, they may select whether to attend an upper secondary school or a vocational school. After three years, they are required to pass the national matriculation examination, which allows them to apply for a university or a university of applied sciences (polytechnics).

*Figure 1 – The Finnish education system (Aho et al. 2006: 15)*



Although the Finnish education system is similar to that of other countries, there are significant differences. First, pupils start their compulsory education at the age of 7. At the age of six, pupils may attend a free pre-primary education and most of them do so. Whether pre-primary education is provided is decided by the local authorities. Second, Finland has a unified system of education and does not differentiate between lower and upper levels or grades in basic schools. For the first six years, pupils are taught by a class teacher and after that by subject teachers. To lower dropout rates and boost achievement, guidance counselling is integrated into the first six years. And third, after nine years of compulsory education, students are given the opportunity to attend a tenth year to improve their grades and clarify their career plans (Aho et al. 2006: 20-21).

Education in Finland is characterized by greater level of freedom for both students and teachers. While there are national guidelines, teachers may select their own materials and create their own syllabi for tuition. Students at secondary schools are allowed to determine their own learning plans and pace by selecting subjects from various modules. Moreover, students do not get a year-end grade, but they are evaluated at the end of each term. After completing all required courses, students may take the National Matriculation Examination, which is their only major assessment. In this way, students become more responsible, make their own choices and learn to plan their own lives already before they enter higher education (Aho et al. 2006: 21-22).

### **2.2.3 Teacher training in Finland**

The social status of teachers in Finland is very good and, therefore, teaching is a popular profession. According to Eurydice, only 20 percent of those who participated in an entrance exam into educational programmes were admitted in 2014 and, consequently, the qualification of teachers is generally very good (European Commission, 1995-2017)<sup>4</sup>. Since 1999 the curriculum for education of teachers of general and vocational institutions has been identical. Although the educational institutions have a great degree of autonomy and freedom in designing their curriculum, the studies for both vocational and general education teachers include basic and subject studies in education, subject didactics and teaching practice.

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<sup>4</sup> Eurydice, Web, June 24 2017, [https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/fpfis/mwikis/eurydice/index.php/Finland:Teachers\\_and\\_Education\\_Staff](https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/fpfis/mwikis/eurydice/index.php/Finland:Teachers_and_Education_Staff)

The education of class teachers is provided by university faculties of education or other equivalent units called teacher education units. Teacher education units are institutions that have teacher training school(s) for teaching practice, experiments, research, and continuing education. Teacher training schools may include either grades 1 to 6 of basic education or grades 7 to 9 of basic education or general upper secondary education or possibly all of these. The length of class teacher education is 5 years and combines subject studies with pedagogical training. For class teachers, acquiring a degree requires completion of 300 ECTS<sup>5</sup> credits, 60 of which cover pedagogical studies. Of those 60, practical training amounts to 20 ECTS credits. The education programme for class teachers consists of basic, subject, and advanced studies in education, minor subject studies, and teaching practice. Minor subject studies include completion of at least 60 ECTS credits in the teaching subject and gives eligibility to teach grades 1-9 as a subject teacher (European Commission, 1995-2017)<sup>6</sup>.

#### **2.2.4 Teaching practicum in Finland**

The Finnish perspective on teacher training highlights the interaction of theoretical and practical training and thus integrates theoretical aspects with practice during studies. First, emphasis is put on beginning practical training as early as possible to familiarize students with the routines and activities of practice schools. Second, the interaction between practice and studies of educational theory is emphasized throughout the entire period of studies. Thus, some practice teaching takes place during every study year and during every study period as part of a given teacher education programme (Kansanen: 91).

All pedagogical studies are in every aspect organized by the departments of teacher education within universities and their faculties of education. The schools in which a major part of student pedagogical practice is conducted are linked organically with the departments of education (Kansanen: 89). The link between teacher training schools and the faculties of education facilitates communication between the two institutions, which allows for practicum to be of similar quality at all training schools of a particular university. “The university practice schools also function as normal comprehensive schools, following the same

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<sup>5</sup> European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System

<sup>6</sup> Eurydice, Web, June 24 2017,

[https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/fpfis/mwikis/eurydice/index.php/Finland:Teachers\\_and\\_Education\\_Staff](https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/fpfis/mwikis/eurydice/index.php/Finland:Teachers_and_Education_Staff)

curriculum as in other schools. However, special competency requirements are expected of the teachers who are expected to be experienced supervisors” (Kansanen: 92). The fact that universities have their own practice schools under their administration means that all hired teachers can be trained in supervising trainees and, consequently, supervising teachers do not need to be instructed at the beginning of each practicum period.

All practical training proceeds gradually over a longer period of time. Students first observe pupils of different ages, their roles as group members, and their ways of interacting in the instruction process in different classes and grades (Kansanen: 91). This process helps the practicing teachers to get gradually accustomed to the school environment and to the everyday reality of the teaching profession. Student teachers are then led to assume an increasing amount of responsibility and develop their own teacher identity while reflecting on their own performance and on the performance of other students.

Practical training of classroom teachers usually consists of successive internships starting with the introductory practice and following with basic practice, field school practice and, finally, teaching practice. This organization of practice is identical for most teacher training programmes, yet practical training may vary from university to university. Basic practice introduces students to the teaching of different subjects, the basic forms of teaching, and the evaluation of teaching and learning. Students plan, teach, and evaluate lessons in different subjects at a university training school. Students are required to keep a portfolio of their work, which also contains evaluation of their own teaching and of their classmates’ teaching. The aim of field school practice and final teaching practice is to develop an independent teacher identity in the students. For that reason, they work together with their supervising teachers with increasing responsibility over a long period of time in the same class. During the final practice periods, students are expected to identify possible themes for their respective theses (Kansanen: 97).

While class teachers receive education solely at the faculties of education, subject teachers are educated by university faculties of different subjects in cooperation with the teacher education units within the faculties of education. Moreover, students usually first apply for a study programme in a particular subject and then, after one or two years, they apply for subject teacher education. Some universities offer the possibility of applying directly for subject teacher education programme education, when education is secured by the department of

teacher education in cooperation with the relevant subject departments and teacher training schools. An aspiring teacher of English, therefore, needs to acquire a master's degree in a relevant university study programme (e.g. English linguistics), during which he or she may or may not choose to complete studies in education (European Commission, 1995-2017)<sup>7</sup>. Students have to decide whether or not they want to complete studies in education during the second year and those who decide so start the studies in the third year. Each university may have its own profile of pedagogical studies for subject teachers (Kansanen: 99). Teaching practice is a part of the education studies and takes place at affiliated schools or at the teacher training schools of universities. Students first complete a period of orientation practicum and then proceed with the advanced practicum. The aim of the orientation practicum is to familiarize the novice teacher with teaching and pupils. Students observe and then practice teaching alone or in pairs at affiliated schools or at teacher training schools run by universities. The advanced practicum is designed to train teachers in teaching different subjects, planning lessons, using basic forms of instruction and assessing the work of their pupils. The advanced practicum is different from the orientation practicum in that the teachers have greater amount of independence and are given the opportunity to start developing their own teaching habits and their own ways of functioning as class teachers. Moreover, more emphasis is put on the novice teachers' reflection and assessment of their own work (European Commission, 1995-2017)<sup>8</sup>. The training consists of the following areas:

- a) Teaching observation – distributed appropriately between different periods of teaching practice.
- b) Giving supervised lessons alone and/or with other teacher trainees. The amount of practice lessons varies with the needs of each student and depending on the school's resources.
- c) Subject-didactic group counselling, consisting of discussions and planning and assessment meetings between instructors and teacher trainees with the purpose of strengthening the trainees' independence and own identity as teachers (European Commission, 1995-2017)<sup>9</sup>.

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<sup>7</sup> Eurydice, Web, June 24, 2017

[https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/fpfis/mwikis/eurydice/index.php/Finland:Teachers\\_and\\_Education\\_Staff](https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/fpfis/mwikis/eurydice/index.php/Finland:Teachers_and_Education_Staff)

<sup>8</sup> Eurydice, Web, June 24, 2017

[https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/fpfis/mwikis/eurydice/index.php/Finland:Teachers\\_and\\_Education\\_Staff](https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/fpfis/mwikis/eurydice/index.php/Finland:Teachers_and_Education_Staff)

<sup>9</sup> Eurydice, Web, June 24, 2017

[https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/fpfis/mwikis/eurydice/index.php/Finland:Teachers\\_and\\_Education\\_Staff](https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/fpfis/mwikis/eurydice/index.php/Finland:Teachers_and_Education_Staff)



The admission procedure to study programmes for subject teachers may vary depending on the subject and faculty selected. When admitted to a subject-specific education programme, the student needs to apply for subject teacher education, where admission is granted on the basis of aptitude tests and, in some cases, study records. Subject teachers also have the possibility to acquire pedagogical education after they have graduated from their study programme. This education usually lasts one academic year (ibid.).

### **2.2.5 Summary**

Instruction in English is provided by class teachers and subject teachers. Class teachers are responsible for teaching grades 1 to 6 at basic schools and subject teachers provide education to pupils of upper elementary and vocational schools as well as to grades 7 to 9 of basic schools. The class teacher is obliged to complete a master's degree study programme at a faculty of education, during which he or she needs to acquire 60 ECTS credits in pedagogical subjects (of the total of 300 ECTS credits). Subject teachers need to apply for a master's programme in their respective field and then during their studies (or after their successful completion), they need to apply for pedagogical education, which is provided by the university's faculty of education.

Practical training is conducted at training schools under the universities' administration, amounts to 20 ECTS credits and usually lasts between one and two years, depending on the student's choices in study plan organization. Practicum for class teachers consists of introductory practice, basic practice, field school practice, and final teaching practice. Students start practical training as early as possible, i.e. in the first semester if possible. The structure of practicum is not bound by any legislature and may vary from university to university. Teaching practicum for subject teachers is divided into two parts – the orientation practicum and the advanced practicum. The orientation practicum includes observations and practice lessons (individual or group) and is designed to provide the teacher trainee with enough time to familiarize themselves with the school environment. The advanced practicum includes more observations (spread throughout the entire length of its duration), supervised lessons (the amount may vary with each student's aptitude), and subject-didactic group counselling, which aims to inspire the novice teacher's ability to reflect upon his own teaching, and to help the trainees develop an independent teacher identity.

## 2.3 Germany

This chapter provides information on the specificities of the German education system, teacher training process, and practicum model. The system of education in Germany is complex due to a great degree of variation among the Länder (regions), which are responsible for its administration and that is why the chapter commences with a brief description of the education system to facilitate the reader's understanding. A summary is provided at the end of this chapter, describing the education and training that each teacher of English is obliged to undergo regardless of the Land of origin.

### 2.3.1 National specificities

Germany is a federal republic and thus legislation is defined at two levels – the federal level and the regional level. Therefore, responsibility for the education system is divided between the Federation and the regions (Länder). The power of the Federation is delimited by the constitution – The Basic Law for the Federal Republic of Germany (*Grundgesetz*). Where the Basic Law does not apply, legislative power lies with the Länder, whose responsibility is to provide an efficient school system for all citizens. Each land has its own Ministry of Education and Cultural Affairs, which develops plans targeting school needs and school locations. Due to the independence of each Land, there might be some differences among the Länder such as the amount of schools and regional distribution of each type of school. However, none of those differences is expected to influence the teacher training process (European Commission, 1995-2017)<sup>10</sup>.

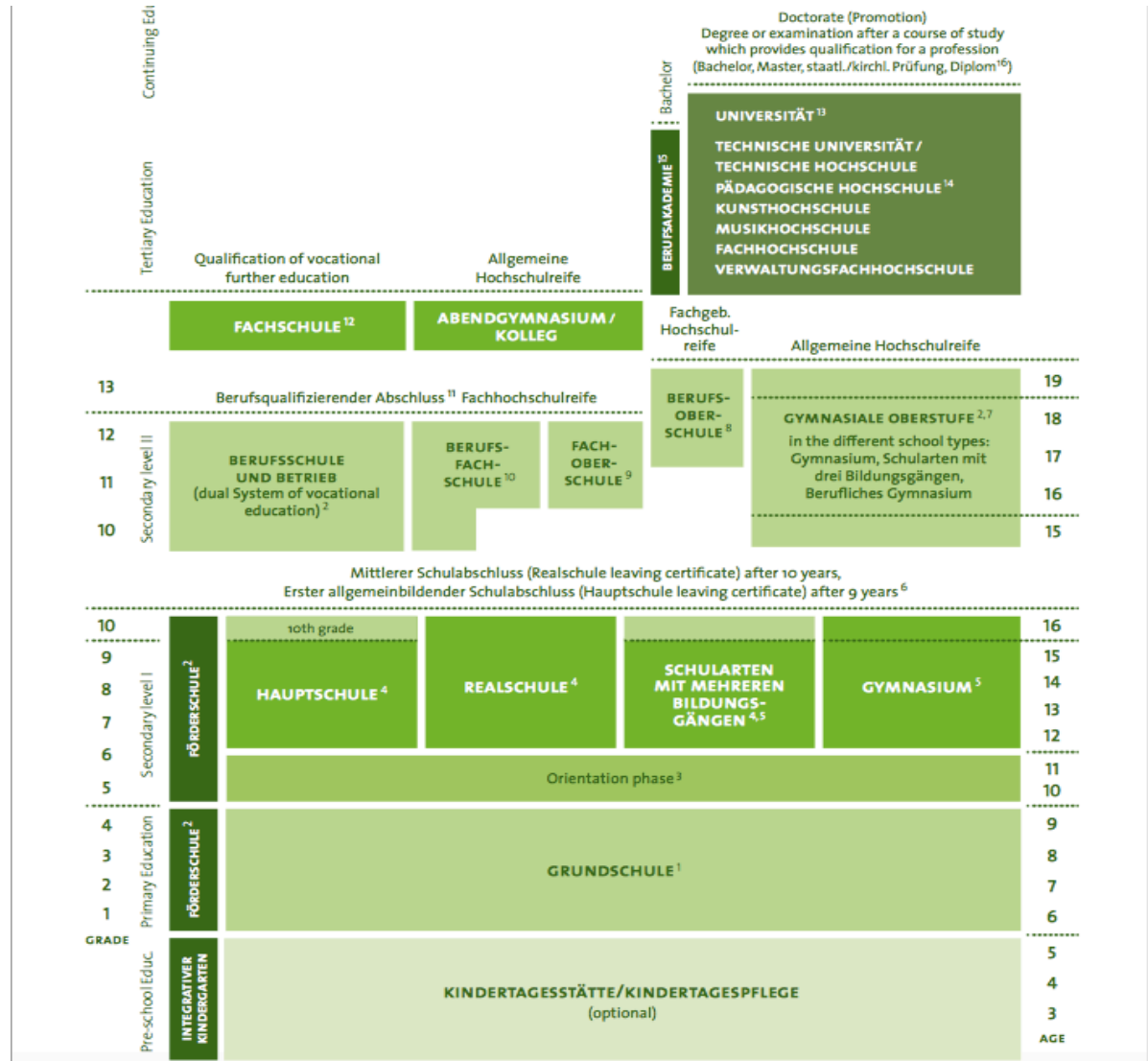
The structure of German education system is different from the one in the Czech Republic in that pupils must select the future course of their education already in the fourth grade. The entire structure of German education system can be seen in Figure 4 below. Having passed through the first four grades of basic school or *Grundschule*, the pupils then select a lower secondary education pathway. When the pupils acquire relevant qualification from the completion of the lower secondary school, they may select between a vocational training and general education pathways, which qualifies them for admission to universities.

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<sup>10</sup> Eurydice, Web, June 24, 2017

[https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/fpfis/mwikis/eurydice/index.php/Germany:Primary Education](https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/fpfis/mwikis/eurydice/index.php/Germany:Primary_Education)

Figure 2 - Primary and secondary education in Germany<sup>11</sup>.



### 2.3.2 Teacher training in Germany

There are two stages of the teacher training process in Germany – a course of higher education (including periods of practical training) and preparatory service in a school setting. Study programmes in education are offered at universities, *Technische Hochschulen/Universitäten*, *Pädagogische Hochschulen*, and colleges of art and music. In order to be admitted to a study programme in education, the student is required to have

<sup>11</sup> Kultusminister konferenz, available at [https://www.kmk.org/fileadmin/Dateien/pdf/Dokumentation/en\\_2017.pdf](https://www.kmk.org/fileadmin/Dateien/pdf/Dokumentation/en_2017.pdf)

attained the *Allgemeine Hochschulreife*, which is acquired after attending school for 12 or 13 years and passing the *Abitur* examination. The preparatory service takes place at teacher training institutions and training schools established in all Länder to coordinate theoretical training with teaching practice. Those who wish to commence the preparatory service first need to pass the First State Examination (*Erste Staatsprüfung*), which they take at the end of the higher education study programme. However, it is now in most cases substituted with the Master's degree examination (European Commission, 1995-2017)<sup>12</sup>.

Due to the complexity of the German education system, five different teaching career types need to be distinguished, all of which have their own specificities regarding the training process. The education for all career types is concluded with a paper demonstrating the ability for independent scientific work and the First State Examination or corresponding higher education qualification (Bachelor's or Master's examination). The career types are listed below:

- 1) Teaching at the primary level (*Grundschule*)
- 2) Teaching at all or individual lower secondary school types
- 3) Teaching of the general education subjects at upper secondary level or teaching at the *Gymnasium*.
- 4) Teaching of vocational subjects at upper secondary level or at vocational schools.
- 5) Teaching career in special education (not discussed in this paper) (ibid.).

Qualification for teachers at the primary level consists of a course of study lasting at least seven semesters (210 ECTS credits) and covering both theoretical and practical training. Students of this type of teacher training receive education in educational sciences and primary school didactics with emphasis on inclusive instruction and assessment practice. Furthermore, students follow subject-related and subject-didactic courses in German, mathematics and one other subject. One of these subjects is studied as a major subject. Most importantly, practical training begins already in the first semester wherever possible (ibid.).

Aspiring teachers at lower secondary schools are obliged to complete a course of study lasting seven semesters (210 ECTS credits), during which they are to follow courses in educational

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<sup>12</sup> Eurydice, Web, June 24, 2017

[https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/fpfis/mwikis/eurydice/index.php/Germany:Initial Education for Teachers Working in Early Childhood and School Education](https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/fpfis/mwikis/eurydice/index.php/Germany:Initial_Education_for_Teachers_Working_in_Early_Childhood_and_School_Education)

sciences and undergo practical training. Moreover, students are required to complete studies and didactics relating to at least two subjects. The ratio of these subjects to the educational sciences is supposed to be 2:1 (ibid.).

The education for teachers at secondary schools consists of six semesters of a Bachelor's study course and two to four semesters of a Master's study programme. Students follow a study programme providing in-depth education in two subjects comprising 180 ECTS credits. The remaining 120 ECTS credits are divided between practical training in schools and educational sciences. In case of vocational secondary school teacher training, courses in educational sciences focus on the relevant vocational subject area (ibid.).

Having completed their studies and passed the First State Examination, the aspiring teachers are allowed to enter the second phase of the teacher training process – the preparatory service. It can last between 12 and 24 months and aims to provide practical training based upon the knowledge and experience gained during the course of study. Although the actual realization of the preparatory service may vary in some respects (such as mode of feedback, reflection, assessment etc.) with every individual teacher, the model is universal for all. The preparatory service follows the following format in all cases (ibid.):

- 1) Introductory seminars
- 2) observations
- 3) accompanied teaching
- 4) independent teaching
- 5) training in seminar events

Throughout the entire duration of the preparatory service, the trainees are given feedback by their guiding teacher, their tutor (a more senior teacher), and, in some cases, the headmaster. The preparatory service consists of two 6-month-long blocks: the introductory part and the advanced part. During the introductory part, the trainees conduct 120 hours of observations and 80 hours of teaching while they attend a theoretical seminar in school legislation and methodology. In the advanced part, they continue attending the seminar and teach 10-12 hours

per week<sup>13</sup>. All teacher trainees are placed with respect to the type of career they have chosen. The preparatory service concludes with the Second State Examination, which is a prerequisite for employment in the state school sector. The Second State Examination is evaluated by a state examination commission and consists of the following parts:

- a) a written paper relating to educational theory, pedagogic psychology, or the didactics of one of the subjects studied;
- b) a practical teaching examination involving demonstration lessons in the chosen subjects;
- c) an examination on basic questions of educational theory, educational and civil service legislation, and school administration
- d) an examination on didactic and methodological issues in the subjects studied (ibid.).

Having acquired the Master's degree and having passed the Second State Examination after the preparatory service, the teacher training process is complete and teachers are entitled to work in the respective type of career they have selected.

### 2.3.3 Summary

Despite the seeming complexity of the German education system, there is very little room for variation in the education of English teachers in Germany. Given the different qualification certificates at the end of the lower secondary education pathways, all teachers must have passed through the *Realschule* or *Gymnasium*. That allows them to enter the *Gymnasiale Oberstufe*, at the end of which pupils acquire the *Allgemeine Hochschulreife* – the qualification necessary for admission to higher education institutions. *Allgemeine Hochschulreife* can be obtained at a *Berufsoberschule*, but that applies, in most cases, to students who have completed vocational training and seek requalification for higher education (see chapter 2.2.3). It is at this point that the aspiring teacher must reach a decision on their future career. Those wishing to teach at the primary education level enter a four-year-long educational programme, where practical training starts as soon as possible (first semester, if possible). Such teachers teach not only English, but all other subjects as well. Teachers who

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<sup>13</sup> Information about the amount of lessons taught and observed are based on communication with a grammar school teacher from Germany and might vary for different institutions and Länder.

wish to teach English at lower secondary schools also enrol in a study programme lasting four years, but instead of instruction in all subjects, they receive pedagogical and in depth subject-related education in two subjects, together with periods of practical training spread throughout the entire course of study. Aspiring secondary school teachers need to complete a Bachelor's and, subsequently, Master's study programme in two subjects, during which they undergo periods of practical training and receive theoretical instruction in educational sciences. Following the completion of respective study programmes, all teachers, regardless of the selected career type, are obliged to enter the preparatory service. The preparatory service lasts between 12 and 24 months, during which teacher trainees are introduced to the school environment and everyday activities and duties of full-time teachers. The process moves gradually from introductory seminars and observations towards guided and eventually independent teaching. Additionally, during the preparatory service, the trainees are paid a small allowance equal to a portion of a teacher's starting salary.

## **2.4 Belgium**

Teacher training in Belgium differs for the Flemish community and the French community. Similarly to other countries, teachers are trained both at faculties of education and at other faculties depending on the subject studied. Most teachers educated at other faculties are qualified to teach one or two specific subjects in higher secondary education, while education for primary and lower secondary school teachers is provided at the faculties of education (Soetaert & Van Heule 1996: 55).

At faculties of education, practical training follows the following schedule:

a) Flemish community:

- 1) 1<sup>st</sup> year - maximum of 4 weeks + model lessons and group practice sessions
- 2) 2<sup>nd</sup> year – maximum of 8 weeks + model lessons and group practice sessions
- 3) 3<sup>rd</sup> year – maximum of 16 weeks (ibid.).

In the third year, the sandwich model has been introduced – i.e. students have two weeks of classes followed by two weeks of teaching practice. The aim is not to train specialists in a

specific subject, but to give students substantial training in three or four subjects in order to minimize the number of different teachers for the pupils in the first years of school (ibid.).

b) French community:

- 1) 1<sup>st</sup> year – two weeks
- 2) 2<sup>nd</sup> year – four weeks
- 3) 3<sup>rd</sup> year – fifteen weeks (ibid.)

The approach of the French community is different from the Flemish community in that it emphasizes subject studies and aims to provide students with polyvalent training in the subjects they will teach while developing a minimum of theoretical background for teaching practice (ibid.).

At other faculties the teacher training programme includes 45 hours of practice. Those include 5 hours of observations and 5 hours of practice lessons, the remaining 35 hours comprise independent teaching realized within one week. Practical training is complemented with classes in subject teaching methodology (ibid.).

There is no legal document concerning the organization and structure of the teaching practicum in the Flemish community in Belgium. The practicum is conducted in collaboration between the staff member responsible for support in the host school, institution or centre and the practicum supervisor of the student's faculty. The collaboration takes place on the basis of an agreement covering the following areas:

- a) The division of responsibilities between the faculty school, the trainee, and the faculty
- b) the role of the faculty school in the evaluation of the trainee
- c) the period or school year in which the pre-service training takes place
- d) the trainee's duties (European Commission, 1995-2017)<sup>14</sup>.

In the French community, the training courses are conducted in compliance with the Décret définissant la formation initiale des instituteurs et des régents legislation, issued in December

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<sup>14</sup> [https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/fpfis/mwikis/eurydice/index.php/Belgium-Flemish-Community:Initial Education for Teachers Working in Early Childhood and School Education](https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/fpfis/mwikis/eurydice/index.php/Belgium-Flemish-Community:Initial_Education_for_Teachers_Working_in_Early_Childhood_and_School_Education)



2000. It requires the courses for primary and lower secondary school teachers to connect theory with practice. The training model used is a simultaneous one, which means that periods of practical training takes place simultaneously with theoretical instruction.

Teaching practice is organized during each of the three years of study. The structure respects the progressive nature of the teaching practicum and thus in the first year, trainees attend observations in the presence of the practicum supervisor and in the second and third years, they take charge of a class with increasing independence. Trainees undergo their teaching practice in teams of at least two people at the same school. The trainees are guided and led to reflect firstly by the faculty teacher and secondly by the practicum supervisor from their university. Professors responsible for teacher training and professors responsible for discipline-specific training share in supervising each student at the rate of at least one visit per week (European Commission, 1995-2017)<sup>15</sup>.

Upper secondary education teachers are educated at universities in their subject-related study programmes. Such study programmes include fewer hours of practical training than programmes at faculties of education. However, the progression from observation via supervised teaching to independent teaching is retained. Before the practical training, the trainees attend practical analysis seminars, which are designed to allow students to experiment, observe and analyse the different parts of the profession, progressively develop their professional identity and plan their future training (ibid.). The practical training also includes periods of school activities outside lessons (e.g. administrative tasks). Part of the teaching practice must be done by teams of at least two students in the same institution. The place where periods of practicum takes place varies to allow students to experience as many teaching situations as possible (ibid.).

Practicum supervisors are approved by the institution that provides the teacher training programme and are paid for looking after the trainees. Furthermore, they provide them with educational support and collaborate with the course teachers in the guidance and assessment of the trainees (ibid.).

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<sup>15</sup> [https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/fpfis/mwikis/eurydice/index.php/Belgium-French-Community:Initial Education for Teachers Working in Early Childhood and School Education](https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/fpfis/mwikis/eurydice/index.php/Belgium-French-Community:Initial_Education_for_Teachers_Working_in_Early_Childhood_and_School_Education)

## 2.5 Czech Republic

The following chapter describes the teaching practicum model used in the Czech Republic. Teacher education is based on Act no. 563/2004 *on Pedagogical Staff and on the Amendment to Some Other Acts*, which states that all teachers are required to acquire Master's degree in a relevant study programme. Therefore, education for teachers is provided by different faculties at many universities and because of that, there are differences in content. In case the study programme is subject-related, not pedagogically oriented, teachers must attend a course in pedagogy in the lifelong learning programme (Pečínková 2011.: 54). Pupils in the Czech Republic begin learning a foreign language in the fourth grade, which means that teaching English as a foreign language takes place both at primary and secondary schools.

Currently all faculties of education offer an integrated Master's study programme for primary school teachers (Učitelství pro 1. stupeň základní školy). Students are provided with subject-specific education in a wide range of subjects as well as with pedagogical and psychological education. Emphasis is put on self-reflection and leading students to acquire diagnostic skills to be able to treat and assess every child individually (Ibid.: 41).

The amount of practical training provided to students is different for each faculty, but it usually consists of observations and teaching. The first stage of practical training is analytical – the teacher trainee is introduced to the school environment and observes lessons and analyses the education process. During the second stage (independent teaching), the trainees are led to develop diagnostic skills in that they are encouraged to assess every pupil's personality (intelligence, cognitive skills, abilities, emotional intelligence, etc.). The form of feedback is different with every faculty teacher, which means that while some students might be led towards reflection and self-evaluation others might be given complete independence. Primary school teacher trainees practice teaching in all subjects including one foreign language (Ibid.: 42-43).

Admission criteria to faculties of education differ with every university. While some require both written and oral examinations, other faculties accept the National Comparative Exams in general education prerequisites. The universities are responsible for designing their own curricula of their study programmes, but each programme needs to be accredited by the Accreditation committee. Instruction in Bachelor's programmes mostly consists of theoretical

education in relevant subjects, while pedagogical and psychological education, together with practical training, is focused on in the first semester of Master's programmes (Ibid.: 56).

### **2.5.1 Current perspective on teaching practicum and practical training at faculties of education**

Current perspective on practical training emphasises the students' ability to reflect on their own skills. Students are encouraged to evaluate their own performance using microteaching sessions, lesson simulations, analyses of recorded material, and lesson protocols. Students discuss their performance with the faculty teacher, who provides them with useful feedback. The purpose of emphasising self-reflection is to inspire teacher trainees to develop their own identity as teachers. The trainees should evaluate themselves and feedback from the faculty teacher and university supervisor should contain only the trainee's possible areas of improvement. Other students should take active part in the evaluation process to highlight the cooperative nature of teaching (Ibid.: 60).

At most faculties of education, the first period of practical training is the *orientační praxe*. Its purpose is to introduce students to the school environment, manner of supervision, pupils' social roles and the interaction between pupils and teachers. Selected faculties also offer, as a vocational subject, a pedagogical and psychological practicum, where students are given an opportunity to develop their communication and diagnostic abilities (Ibid.: 61). The second period of practical training is the *souvislá praxe*. The requirements and content of the second practicum differs with each faculty of education and thus an overview is provided in the paragraphs below.

Practical training for primary school teachers at the Faculty of Education at Charles University starts in the first semester with an introductory course in education with practicum (*Úvodní pedagogický kurz s praxí*), which is designed to introduce students to the educational process in primary education. It lasts a week, during which groups of five students observe classes and discuss relevant issues with the school head. Following the introductory course, the training continues in the third and fourth semesters with teaching practicum I and II (*Učitelské praktikum I a II*). During the first part, students observe lessons at different primary schools for three hours every week and are led to keep a teaching portfolio while reflecting on the observed lessons. In the second part, students reflect on their own teaching at one specific

primary school. They teach three hours every week and discuss their performance with other students, mentors and supervisors. In the fifth semester, teacher trainees are required to select a school and observe the entire first week of the school year so that they learn the specifics of teaching at the primary level. Further training is required in the ninth and tenth semesters in the form of another teaching practicum I and II (*Souvislá pedagogická praxe I a II*). In the first practicum, trainees observe their class for one day in groups of two and then spend two weeks with independent teaching. They teach two lessons each day and in the remaining time they shadow the faculty teacher. Being able to undergo practical training in groups is beneficial not only in that students learn the importance of cooperation in the teaching profession, but also because they can give each other more feedback on their performance and thus further develop their reflective skills.

Aspiring lower and upper secondary school teachers are required to attend three periods of practical training throughout both Bachelor's and Master's studies. The first period (*náslechová praxe*) is of motivational character. Students observe classes in groups of five. The group typically observes for 2 days at a primary school and for 2 to 3 days at a secondary school. During the second and third periods in the first and second semesters of Master's studies, students teach independently for four weeks at lower and upper secondary schools. Apart from practicum, they are required to attend a reflective seminar where they can discuss their experience with other students<sup>16</sup>.

Masaryk University in Brno follows a similar structure of practical training. During the Bachelor's studies, students attend the first period of practical training (*asistentská praxe*) in the form of individual lessons given to lower secondary school pupils over the course of two - third and fourth - semesters (two lessons per week). The following three semesters of practicum (*učitelská praxe I, II a III*) take place during the Master's studies. The first period is introductory and students help the faculty teacher with everything but teaching (assessment, planning, field trips, parents' meetings etc.). Teaching itself amounts to six hours only from the total of 40 hours spent in the faculty school. During the second and third periods of practicum, teacher trainees teach independently a pre-set number of lessons (10 and 20). Together with all periods of training, students are required to attend reflective seminars, where they are encouraged to reflect on their performance and discuss their experience with

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<sup>16</sup> Available at <http://pages.pedf.cuni.cz/spp/typy-praxi/>

other students and the supervisor. Students are also obliged to keep a teacher's diary and their own portfolio<sup>17</sup>.

Other universities follow a similar structure in that students first go through a period of observations and then are required to teach a certain amount of lessons independently. More details on the practical training at other universities are available in Table 9 below.

*Table 1 – Practical training provided at faculties of education at universities offering education for lower and upper secondary school teachers<sup>18</sup>.*

University	Practicum	Length
University of West Bohemia	Bloková praxe náslechová	10 observed lessons (5 for each subject)
	Bloková praxe výstupová	20 taught lessons (10 for each subject)
	Souvislá pedagogická praxe	2 observed lessons and 40 taught lessons over 4 weeks
Palacký University Olomouc	Praxe v edukačním procesu	10 observed lessons
	Souvislá pedagogická praxe I	Negotiable number of lessons over 3 weeks
	Souvislá pedagogická praxe II	Negotiable number of lessons over 4 weeks
Jan Evangelista Purkyně University in Ústí nad Labem	Souvislá pedagogická praxe I	6 observed lessons, 16 taught lessons, and 28 hours of assistance over 3 weeks
	Souvislá pedagogická praxe II	6 observed lessons, 16 taught lessons, and 28 hours of assistance over 3 weeks.
University of Hradec Králové	Průběžná pedagogická praxe	4 observed lessons, 4 taught lessons 4, and reflective seminars over one semester

<sup>17</sup> Available at <http://katedry.ped.muni.cz/pedagogika/praxe-spolecneho-zakladu> and at <https://is.muni.cz>

<sup>18</sup> Available at respective university websites

	Souvislá pedagogická praxe	48 taught lessons (24 in each subject) over one month
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However, other than pedagogical faculties offer no such training. English teachers graduating from philological study programmes must only pass examinations in a restricted group of pedagogical and psychological subjects, where they are provided with theoretical instruction on educational sciences. They are required to undergo practical training as well, but that amounts to eighteen hours only over two weeks and its process is not standardized. Consequently, the practical training may vary with every faculty teacher.

In conclusion, teachers from faculties of education receive a more intense practical preparation and, because of that, may feel better prepared for the teaching profession than students of non-pedagogical study programmes. In case of English, there are many teachers starting their career with degrees in philological study programmes. The analytical part of this thesis presents the analysis of semi-structured interviews with graduates of English philology Master's programme at Charles University in Prague.

### **2.5.2 Summary and recommendations**

In the Czech Republic, English is taught by class teachers at the primary level (grades 1-5) and subject teachers at lower and upper secondary levels. Class teacher education is provided exclusively at the faculties of education and comprises altogether six semesters of practical training during which students get accustomed to the school environment and various aspects of the teaching profession, they receive instruction on lesson planning and assessment. Moreover, students go through some periods of practical training in pairs or groups and thus have more opportunity to reflect not only on own performance, but also on the performance of fellow student teachers.

Aspiring EFL subject teachers are able to choose from two possible education pathways. First, they may enrol into a study programme at any faculty of education that offers education for lower and upper secondary school teachers. In that case, they are required to pass through three periods of practical training, the first of which consists mostly of observations, while the

following two include independent teaching. Second, they may enrol in a philological study programme during (or after) which they are required to pass a set of educational science subjects and only one period of practical training including 18 hours of teaching. With such short exposure to the school environment, student teachers receive only very little first-hand experience and, therefore, might not feel well prepared for their future profession. The importance of practical training is emphasised by Tuli & File (2009) who assert that practicum helps teachers understand the socio-cultural, political and economic factors underpinning education (p. 110).

Eyers (2004 as cited in Tuli & File 2009) outlined the characteristics of a quality practicum as follows:

- a) Integrates theoretical knowledge and professional practice
- b) is designed and implemented within a partnership involving teacher education institutions and training schools.
- c) articulates clear and progressive stages for the development of acquired skills and knowledge
- d) provides diverse experiences in a range of school contexts and with a variety of students
- e) assesses student performance against clear delineations of purposes, roles and expectations.
- f) involves ongoing evaluation and response
- g) is flexible and encourages innovation.

Taking into account Eyers's characteristics and the description of the teacher training process in Germany and Finland in chapters 2.1 and 2.2, the following recommendations are proposed for training teachers of EFL in the Czech Republic.

1) Practical training should include at least three semesters of practical training progressing from observations through teaching in groups towards independent teaching. Longer exposure to the everyday reality of the school environment and the teaching profession provides the students with a frame of reference to the skill they are building and might mitigate the risk of premature occupational burnout in the future. This should be incorporated into the lifelong

learning programme for teachers in order to secure practical training of sufficient length for all aspiring teachers, not only students of faculties of education.

2) Manner and form of feedback to teacher trainees should be standardized so that all student teachers acquire well-formed reflective abilities and get the chance to discuss their experience with fellow students and experienced professionals. Each period of practical training should be accompanied by a reflective seminar and some form of written communication should be secured between the faculty school and the university so that each faculty teacher receives sufficient instructions on the form and amount of feedback they are to provide the student with.

3) School heads should offer part-time jobs or internships for graduates. Similar to the model of the preparatory service in Germany, aspiring teachers would benefit greatly from a chance to ease into the transition from being a student to being a teacher. Being able to have enough time to learn the in-and-outs of the particular school where the novice teacher starts their career is beneficial not only for the novice teachers as it reduces the amount of stress, but also for the pupils as the teacher can focus more on their performance and, furthermore, for the school heads as well as satisfied teachers are more likely to last. It is presumed that these three recommendations might help to improve the quality of the current model of teacher training.

## **2.6 Overview of presented models**

This chapter is included to present the reader with a clear overview of the presented models. Since this chapter follows directly the summary of the practicum model used in the Czech Republic, its description is not repeated in this chapter.

The Finnish model of practical training differentiates between preparation of class teachers and subject teachers. Class teachers receive a more extensive practical training than subject teachers whose preparation focuses more on subject-related studies. Class teachers start practical training as soon as possible – i.e. in the first semester – and undergo periods of teaching practicum in each year. The practicum is not carried out in week-long blocks but proceeds over a longer period of time throughout the semester. The practical training starts



with observations in the introductory practicum and then follows with periods of teaching with increased independence. All periods of practicum are accompanied by reflective seminars. All teacher training is centralized to faculties of education, which cooperates with other faculties on the education of subject teachers. Subject teachers undergo one to two years of practical training divided into two major blocks – the orientation practicum and the advanced practicum. Observations during the orientation practicum are spread throughout periods of supervised teaching, while the advanced practicum prepares teachers for independent teaching. The trainees are also provided with reflection-oriented subject-didactic group counselling during all periods of practicum.

Teacher trainees in Germany receive practical training in two major blocks. The first teaching practicum takes place during the trainee's course of study at a university and its extent depends on the career path selected (primary, lower secondary or secondary). During the first practicum, trainees receive guidance and feedback from the practicum supervisor. After their studies, aspiring teachers begin the preparatory service, which lasts between 12 and 24 months. The organization of the preparatory service may vary depending on the Land where it takes place and on the participants involved. It is commonly divided into the introductory stage and the advanced stage. The introductory stage lasts 6 months and includes 120 hours of observations and 80 hours of teaching. The trainees also attend seminars on school administration, lesson planning, general pedagogy, and school legislature. Feedback on the 80 taught lessons is provided from the guiding teacher at the school where the preparatory service takes place. In some schools, the trainees are supervised by the headmaster as well. The second stage comprises independent teaching of 10 to 12 lessons per week. The trainees continue to attend the theoretical seminar two days per week. Throughout the entire preparatory service, the trainee is observed by the guiding teacher, a tutor and the headmaster, all of whom provide feedback and give the trainee counsel. At the end of the preparatory service, the trainees must take the second state examination, which qualifies them for a full-time teaching position (for its content see chapter 2.3.2).

The Belgian model of teaching practicum differs for the Flemish and the French communities. In both communities, however, faculties of education provide training for primary and lower secondary school teachers and other faculties for upper secondary school teachers. In the Flemish community, teacher trainees at the faculties of education undergo three periods of practicum in the simultaneous model (one week of theory followed by one week of practice).

The periods comprise 4/8/16 hours of teaching in the 1<sup>st</sup>/2<sup>nd</sup>/3<sup>rd</sup> years and the first two periods involve model and practice lessons. The organization of practicum is negotiated between the faculty teacher and a staff member of the trainee's faculty department. In the French community, the periods of practicum are shorter and include 2/4/15 hours respectively. The organization of the practicum is directed by a decree issued in 2000. Trainees undergo practical training in groups and progress from observations to teaching. Feedback is given both by the teacher-training professor and by the subject-specific professor at rate of one visit per week. The practicum supervisor must be approved before they are entitled to supervise trainees.

No recurrent pattern emerged in the description of the selected countries as to whether standardization or regulation by law is of notable importance in the organization of the teaching practicum. Several possible ways of securing similar conditions for trainees appeared in the descriptions. One of them is centralization of the teacher training process to the faculties of education, which gives them control over the entire process. An alternative to that is the establishment of teacher training schools organically linked to universities or creating a network of teacher training schools whose employees would be required to be schooled in supervising trainees.

Most notable factors that appeared recurrently in the practicum models described were length, progressive nature of the teaching practicum and reflection seminars simultaneous with the teaching practice. There is no precise and consistent amount of hours which could be considered an ideal practicum length. Instead, throughout all models, emphasis is put on providing the trainees with enough time to familiarize themselves with all aspects of teaching before commencing their independent teaching practicum. Some models included periods of practicum in groups, but the assessment of efficiency of the group practicum is beyond the scope of this thesis.

### 3 Methodology

The aim of the empirical part of the thesis is to find out how novice teachers reflect on their practicum experience. The research focused on the following research questions:

1. How do novice teachers evaluate their teaching practicum?
2. How was the teaching practicum conducted in each case?
3. How different was the experience for each student?
4. What can be said about the efficiency of the practical training?
5. What can be said about the role of reflection in the novice teachers' practicum?

After a consideration of possible research methods, qualitative approach was selected in order to gather more detailed information. Multiple case study based on in-depth interviews with novice teachers was selected as it is presumed to provide more reliable data for this type of research. The case studies include exclusively teachers of English with no more than 3 years of professional experience. All teachers have worked at upper secondary schools with one teacher now on a maternity leave after three years of experience. The research includes four novice teachers with educational background in the English philology programme at the Faculty of Arts at Charles University in Prague and includes one teacher who received education at the Faculty of Education at the University of South Bohemia and one teacher with Master's degree in English Language and Intercultural Communication at Charles University, Faculty of Arts. The theoretical part of this thesis demonstrates that the difference in the content of teacher training programmes at faculties of education and at other faculties differs greatly and, therefore, the research worked with the assumption that graduates from faculties of education experience the beginning of their career in a different manner than graduates from other faculties.

The research takes into consideration that what is presented is a subjective, and thus biased, view of the novice teachers, which is in no manner universal to all novice teachers. However, recurrent issues emerging in more case studies suggest that the view might be shared by more novice teachers undergoing the same process of practical training.

The procedure of conducting the research included the following steps:

- 1) Preliminary research: Gathering information on interview methodology, considering the specificities of the research and their implication for the method used.
- 2) Creating a structure for the interviews with a list of possible prompts for each question (the entire interview structure is included below)
- 3) Making a list of possible respondents, e-mail communication acquiring information on willingness to cooperate, filtering out teacher with irrelevant background
- 4) Scheduling interviews
- 5) Recording

The first phase of the research was to gather sufficient information on the interview methodology in order to ensure that the interview structure is adequate. Literature that was used included Gillham (2000a), Seidman (2006), Gillham (2000b), and Oppenheim (1992). Based on the literature, an interview structure was created that formed the backbone of all conducted interviews. Total of 17 novice teachers were contacted and of those 17, only 6 were eligible for this research. There were three criteria used for the selection of candidates. First, they were required to be teachers of English. Second, teachers with teaching experience longer than three years were excluded. Third, teachers whose teaching practicum was credited for previous teaching experience were not considered for this research. Five of the six teachers included in this research were women. Since the cut-off line for novice teachers was set at three years of experience, the study includes teachers who graduated in years 2014, 2015 and 2016. Of the six teachers included in the study, five graduated from the Faculty of Arts at Charles University and one teacher graduated from the Faculty of Education at University of South Bohemia. Including a teacher with education from a faculty of education may give us better insight into how differently graduates from faculties of education experience the beginning of their career. The sixth case study included in the study describes the beginning of the teaching career of a teacher who had not undergone any practical training during her studies. This case study is included in this thesis to contrast the experience of teachers with and without practical training. However, it describes only the experience of one teacher and the author of this thesis admits, that other teachers might experience it differently. The interviews were conducted in the teachers' L1, which was, in all cases, Czech. Following the respondents' consent, all interviews were audio-recorded at different places depending on the teachers' preferences. The interview was semi-structured, which means that all the respondents were asked the same set of questions but every question developed in a different way at each interview and that is why prompts differed for each respondent. The list of pre-set

prompts is included in the interview structure below. Some of the novice teachers consented to take part in the research only under the condition that the transcription of the interviews is not to be included as it contains private information and for that reason, the thesis does not include the transcriptions. To protect the teachers' privacy, they are referred to in the case studies under different names. The recorded material was then analysed with focus on the research questions mentioned above. Conclusions drawn from the analysis are based on recurrent topics that emerged in the interviews.

The interviews followed the following structure:

#### Part 1

1. How did you get to teaching English?

Prompts: first experience, motivation, favorite age group

2. What about your previous education?

Prompts: good or bad teachers, quality of the institutions, approach to studies

3. (Optional) How did you get to be a camp counselor/coach/tutor/mentor?

Prompts: students or mentees, size of the group, nature of the action in question

#### Part 2

1. How did you get to the school you are at now?

Prompts: institution where they did their practicum, selection process, faculty teacher

2. Please try to describe a day of your practicum from the moment you woke up till the moment you went to bed.

Prompts: experience at school, feelings, students, teacher's rating

3. How did you get your full-time job?

Prompts: selection process, feelings during the interview, trial lesson

#### Part 3

1. Given what you have said about your past training and experience, how do you understand teaching now?

Prompts: relationship with students

2. Can you describe the feelings you have had over the time of your current teaching experience?

Prompts: self-evaluation

3. Given what you have reconstructed in the interview, where do you see yourself going in five years?

Prompts: improvements, goals, weaknesses

## **4 Six Case Studies: Teachers of EFL reflecting on their Teaching Practicum.**

This chapter presents the analysis of the semi-structured interviews with novice teachers. As has been mentioned above, the respondents are referred to under changed names to protect their privacy. The interview was structured into three parts – educational background, the practicum experience, reflections on teaching. Each part was included with a specific purpose. The first part was designed to find any possible influence of previous experience on the respondent's teaching. The questions and prompts focused on received education, former teachers of English, previous experience with any other pedagogical activity, and pre-university language proficiency. The aim of the second part was to gather as much information on the process of the practicum as possible. Significant topics included length of the practicum, manner of supervision by the faculty teacher, mode of feedback, communication between the faculty school and the faculty, observations, or instructions provided to the trainee. The purpose of the third part was to determine how the novice teacher's perspective on teaching has evolved over a longer period of time and also to unravel whether the trainee has doubts about staying in the profession or not. The third part focused on topics such as first days of teaching, future professional plans, or overall evaluation of the practicum. It should be noted that what is presented here are not objective conclusions universal to all novice teachers of EFL, but only accounts of 6 different novice teachers of English.

### **4.1 Novice teacher A: Diana**

Diana is a full-time teacher currently working at a grammar school in Prague. Before she commenced her university studies, she graduated from a general education grammar school in Klatovy. She described herself as a diligent student and mentioned that the grammar school provides good education in science and languages. When asked about her level of English at secondary school, she expressed doubts about her proficiency and stated that in the senior year, she acquired the Cambridge ESOL First Certificate in English, which corresponds to the B2 level according to the Common European Framework of Reference. On the inquiry about her former teacher of English, Diana responded that her secondary school teacher was good, but when asked in more detail, she mentioned that he was not good at motivating students and

demotivated her for the entrance examination to Charles University, which she passed nonetheless. However, throughout the entire interview, none of Diana's answers suggested that this particular teacher made an impact on her current style of teaching. According to Diana's account, she also took seminars in English that were taught by a different teacher who later became her faculty teacher during the teaching practicum.

Having graduated from the Grammar School in Klatovy, Diana entered the English and American Studies programme at the Faculty of Arts at Charles University where she acquired her BA degree before moving into the Master's programme in English philology. Throughout her BA studies, she gave one-to-one classes of English and taught her first group of four people. This experience led to her cooperating with language schools. She completed her Master's degree in 2015 and two months later, she experienced full-time teaching for the first time, when she was hired to cover for an English teacher at a private grammar school in Prague. She spent two and a half months there and in September of the same year, she got a full-time teaching position at another grammar school in Prague, where she has worked since then. No other pedagogical activity was mentioned during the interview.

Diana claims that her motivation to enter the teaching profession was inspired by her professor of Teaching English as a Foreign Language seminar at Charles university and explains that his enthusiasm for the teaching profession and the way his seminars were led motivated her to become a teacher herself. Her decision was later reinforced during the practicum when she realized that working with children suits her better than working with adults as she has more room to make an impact on the pupils and it gives her an opportunity to work with the same pupils over a longer period of time, which she considers more rewarding.

Her overall evaluation of the practicum experience was rather ambivalent. She described the process in the following steps. First, Diana contacted her former teacher at the grammar school which she used to attend and informed the faculty that she is to start the practicum there. The only participants in the practicum were the faculty teacher and herself. Diana explained that she spent the first two days of the practicum observing the classes of the faculty teacher. On being asked what instructions were given to her about those observations she replied that she somehow knew that this is the way it is usually done, but no official instructions were provided to her. However, during the description of the observations, she

mentioned that the faculty teacher told her to focus on particular pupils and imagine, how she would work with those pupils. Diana claimed that the observations were very useful to her in that she had time to familiarize herself with the class and thus knew what she could expect from the pupils. She further stated that two days of observations were adequate for her as she was familiar with the faculty teacher's style of teaching (since she used to be her student) and that considering that the practicum only lasts two weeks, longer period of observation would reduce the teaching time. While the interview was focusing on observations, criticism of some aspects of observations was reappearing consistently. The aspects included predominantly length and instructions. Diana emphasized that trainees should be given more instructions on what they should focus on when observing. She highlights that observations facilitated her entrance into the classroom but had she not been familiar with the teaching style of her teacher, she would have appreciated more time to absorb the teacher's style of teaching.

*Ted' kdybych tu praxi dělala, po té svojí praxi, dala bych tomu nějaký systém. Možná bych ocenila, kdyby mi tehdy někdo řekl, na co přesně se mám zaměřit. Já jsem nevěděla, co tam mám dělat, jen podle sebe jsem si řekla: 'Kouknu se na to jak pracujou.'*

The teaching period of her practicum commenced on the third day. She was informed that she was to teach three classes of pupils of different age. The faculty teacher gave her instructions on the content which was to be covered in her classes, but the manner of delivering the classes was left to her personalization. Diana claimed that she planned all lessons herself and received no instruction or feedback on lesson planning. In planning most of her lessons, she used her knowledge of lesson planning that she acquired while working in language schools. She added that the faculty teacher was too busy with her own responsibilities and could not devote as much time to her as she had expected. At this point, Diana expressed her conviction that a faculty teacher should approach the supervision of teacher trainees more responsibly.

*Ona ta učitelka je skvělá, ale myslím, že toho má hodně, takže tomu nemohla věnovat tolik času a péče k tomu, aby se mnou nějak konzultovala ty plány a hodiny. Ona mi nějak tak důvěřovala a asi si myslela, že to zvládnu a když to nezvládnu, tak je to jedno. Myslím, že ten člověk, co je tam zodpovědný za tu praxi, by to měl brát trochu zodpovědněji.*



Each lesson was followed by a conversation with the faculty teacher who encouraged Diana to reflect on her performance. More feedback was provided by pointing out the strengths and weaknesses of each lesson. However, Diana mentioned that she would have appreciated more feedback on lesson planning and time management. Even though she mentioned that she had difficulties remembering the content of the lessons, Diana stressed that she found it difficult to get used to teaching lessons of 45 minutes instead of 90 and that she was frustrated by not knowing how to deal with problematic pupils. No feedback was provided to her on this issue.

Diana emphasized that the teaching practicum is an indispensable component of the teacher training process of particular importance to those who have little previous experience with teaching. Overall, she evaluated her teaching practicum positively. She claimed that it succeeded in providing her with an image of what it is like to teach at a secondary school, but she feels that it had no impact on her TEFL skills. Moreover, she explained that even though she had enough time to get used to the grammar school, her pupils and co-workers and all administrative procedures, it was more due to her being a graduate of that school than due to sufficient length of the teaching practicum.

*Bylo to spíš takový příjemný, než že by mě to něco naučilo. Bylo dobrý si udělat obrázek o tom, jak to vypadá na střední škole, ale co se týče učení angličtiny, moc přínosný to nebylo.*

In the first chapter of this thesis, it has been mentioned that the beginning of the teaching career is a crucial moment for all novice teachers as they go through a “reality shock” when they have to come to terms with the actual reality of teaching as opposed to what they have previously imagined. For Diana, the reality shock came with her first full-time teaching experience when she covered for a grammar school teacher for two and a half months. Diana explained that in the beginning of this experience, she felt really overwhelmed. What she found worst was that she felt unprepared to cope with a large number of responsibilities at once without time to adjust.

The notion of reality shock resonated through the entire third stage of the interview. On being asked to reflect on how her perspective on teaching has developed over time, Diana claimed that she no longer sees teaching as her calling. She recalled that she used to feel that way two or three years ago, but now she is aware of the fact that teaching cannot be approached that

way as there is a lot of negative sides to teaching such as misbehaving pupils, and people reluctant to learn. Diana then proceeded to explain that now she tries to approach teaching only as a profession and this way she feels no risk of occupational burnout.

There are many conclusions to be drawn from the interview with Diana. One has to bear in mind, however, that they are drawn solely from a subjective account of one novice teacher and might not be applicable to all, which is why they are to be referred to as suggestions instead of conclusions. The first suggestion is that should the periods of practicum be longer, students would have more time for observations, which could give the students more time to focus on the teacher's performance as well as on class dynamics, relationships, or identifying potential problems. The second suggestion is that the faculty and the faculty school should communicate with each other to make sure that the faculty teacher has a clear idea of what instructions on observations are to be given to the trainee. The Belgian model could be an inspiration in that pre-schooled teachers at the faculty schools, who are paid for supervising trainees, would make the cooperation between faculties and faculty schools redundant. The fact that they are remunerated is important as it gives the faculty teacher more freedom, which means they are able to devote more time to the trainee. Furthermore, the risk of feeling overwhelmed when starting the teaching career might be mitigated by implementing post-graduate internships built around the German model of the preparatory service as it would form a transition stage between the practicum and full-time teaching. Above all, it is important that the trainees experience the reality shock during the teaching practicum, where the faculty teacher and practicum supervisor can ensure that the trainee leaves the teaching practicum with a healthy approach to teaching. This can be done only if the trainees are provided with enough practical training, during which they form opinions on teaching based on reality. Diana also felt very positively about the idea of experiencing the practicum with another trainee and reckons that it would have provided her with more opportunity for reflection and facilitated the process of lesson planning.

## **4.2 Novice teacher B: Veronika**

Already the first impression gave away that Veronika is a conscientious and responsible person and throughout the interview, several remarks were made that suggested that this characteristic impacts her teaching. She attended a general education grammar school and

graduated from the Faculty of Arts at Charles University. She acquired both Bachelor's and Master's degree in English Language and Intercultural Communication. She also studied Norwegian studies, but did not complete the programme. Instead, she got another Master's degree in Phonetics. Immediately at the beginning of the interview, she mentioned that she had wanted to be a teacher ever since she was a child. She was motivated towards English by her father, who discouraged her from teaching and encouraged her to pursue an interpreting career. During her studies, however, she decided to pursue a career in teaching. She explained that she reached that decision during her teaching practicum, which she evaluated extremely positively several times throughout the interview. Her practicum experience was in many ways different from that of other interviewed teachers, which will be discussed in more detail further below.

Without any prompts, Veronika described her secondary school teacher of English as a very good and skilled teacher. She emphasized that already at that point she knew she wanted to teach like her once she became a teacher. What was very interesting, however, was that even though, she was aware of having a model teacher, only several similarities appeared when she talked about her own teaching style later on. This discrepancy suggests that her practicum was successful in leading her to develop an independent teacher identity. What she liked about the teacher's style of teaching was that she was very strict, but fair and she was able to present material in a very enticing manner. She also liked how the teacher dealt with problematic students.

Veronika also devotes a lot of her time to teaching-related extracurricular activities. She had worked with children since she was 14 as a summer camp supervisor and later organized free time weekend activities for groups of children. She admitted that this had a large impact on her teaching skills in that she knew how to work with children, but it also supported her illusions about teaching. She explained that it made her think that all children are co-operative and want to be taught and that it was a shock for her to find out later during her career that this is not the case. One of the activities which might also have influenced her teaching skills is that she used to organize role-play weekend activities, where participants assume different roles for a longer period of time. This might have facilitated her getting accustomed to the new teacher role.

Veronika taught one-to-one classes of English throughout her studies, but her first experience with a larger group came during her MA studies when she taught a group of 10-15 Erasmus students. At the same time, she attended a seminar in Teaching English as a Foreign Language. Her teaching practicum came after this experience. Veronika has been teaching at a grammar school in Prague for a year.

Before she started her teaching practicum, she exchanged e-mails with her former secondary school teacher and arranged for her to be able to carry out her practicum there. She then informed the faculty that she is to start the teaching practicum at her former grammar school. The first unusual feature of Veronika's teaching practicum is that her period of practicum lasted longer than those of other interviewed teachers. No fixed period of time was agreed on and Veronika herself mentioned that she stayed as long as she could, which was a month. This suggests that Veronika had strong intrinsic motivation which might have contributed to her evaluating the teaching practicum as an efficient and pleasant experience.

In her case, the period of observation was longer than for other interviewed teachers as well. She said that she observed 12 lessons of her faculty teacher – two for each class that she was going to teach. The faculty teacher often included her in the lessons by allowing her to take part in the activities. Although she did not mention this explicitly, Veronika made the impression that she had a clear idea of what she was expected to do at the observations. She noted down the teacher's in-class activities and made notes about the class and individual pupils.

Veronika claimed that her first classes were very pleasant. She mentioned that she had all lessons planned in detail, which was very time-consuming and exhausting. She admitted that now, as an experienced teacher, she spends much less time on lesson planning than during her practicum. When asked about lesson planning, she mentioned that she felt sufficiently prepared from her TEFL seminars and that she likes to do her own lesson plans. At this point, Veronika admitted that in the beginning of the teaching period of her practicum, she felt scared and anxious about the fact that she is an inexperienced teacher.

*Ze začátku jsem měla pocit, že jsem takovej vetřelec, ale ke konci toho měsíce jsem se cítila mnohem sebevědoměji, jako že jsem měla nastavený ty vztahy s těma*

*třídama, nebo určitý pravidla a tak. Ale zpětně vidím, že jsem pořád byla chráněná tím, že jsem jen praktikant. Pak jsem se určitě cítila líp a mrzelo mě odcházet. Čím déle tam člověk je, tím víc se srovná s rolí učitele.*

Veronika expressed that she was worried that the pupils would recognize that she is inexperienced, which led to feelings of anxiety. The fact that her practicum lasted a month was crucial as it gave her enough time to overcome this anxiety and gain sufficient confidence in her own performance. She added that once she overcame this anxiety, the practicum was a very pleasant experience.

During the first two weeks, the faculty teacher observed all her lessons. Veronika mentioned, however, that feedback provided to her was one-sided and that she was only rarely led to reflect on her own performance. After each lesson, the faculty teacher pointed out the strengths and weaknesses of her performance, gave her advice on how to introduce different material or corrected her pronunciation. When talking about feedback provided to her, Veronika paused and hesitated frequently while trying to remember, which suggests that reflective feedback was not a prominent feature of her practicum. Even though the faculty teacher did not put emphasis on her reflection, Veronika kept a teacher's journal where she wrote entries every day and shared her feelings about her performance that day.

Veronika's overall evaluation of the teaching practicum was very positive. She said that it was a very useful and pleasant experience and expressed her opinion that practical training should form the base of every teacher training programme. However, she also mentioned that it supported her illusions of what it is like to be a teacher as most of her classes were very active and co-operative and she felt that she could reach everybody.

*Já myslím, že to bylo super, že to byl jako hrozně fajn měsíc. Myslím si, že to bylo pro mě hodně přínosný, že jsem si třeba vyzkoušela některý věci jako jsem se třeba naučila s bakalářema, ale myslím si, že mi to posílilo moje iluze o tom, jak funguje učení. Myslím, že by na magistru měla být základem praxe a na tu by měly navazovat další předměty. Čím víc by bylo praxe, tím by to bylo lepší, zvlášť pokud by se to dalo rozebrat s odborníkem.*

Veronika admitted that when she started her full-time job as a teacher, she experienced the same anxiety that she had during her teaching practicum. What she emphasised, however, was that it did not last as long and she was able to adapt to the new environment quickly. Even though she evaluated her practicum as efficient, Veronika admitted that the beginnings of her teaching career were very difficult for her and that she found it very stressful and exhausting. When asked in more detail, she explained that it was because she was required to teach subjects in English that she has no education in and English itself formed only a part of the subjects assigned to her. She said that she eventually coped with that, but she gave the impression that her diligence was what helped her overcome this stressful period. Veronika then added that after she lost her illusions, she was much more optimistic about teaching and did not find it as stressful anymore.

*Když jsem nastoupila do práce, měla jsem taky ten vetřelčí pocit ze začátku. Ale hlavně jsem učila předměty, který jsem neměla vystudovaný, takže to pro mě byla obrovská výzva se to naučit tak, abych to uměla dobře učit a bojovala jsem ze začátku hodně s téma věcma ohledně toho, kde si nastavit hranice. Byla jsem strašně vyčerpaná, fakt jsem ty první tejdny večer brečela únavou.*

On being asked how her perspective on teaching has developed over time, Veronika responded that she thought that it was going to be easier than it is and that she has come to terms with the fact that she cannot reach everybody no matter how hard she tries. However, she is certain about staying in the profession and expressed desire to develop her teaching skills more in the future. Veronika seemed to have a very healthy approach to teaching and no signals of frustration or burnout were evident throughout the interview.

Veronika's case study implies several suggestions for the teaching practicum. First, it illustrates that a longer period of practicum gives students more time to gain confidence in their own performance, which may facilitate the beginning of their full-time teaching position. Second, even though Veronika's practicum lasted a month, she had not experienced the reality shock until she started her full-time job as a teacher. This suggests that the length of the practicum itself does not ensure that the trainee undergoes this experience and there are more variables involved. By adjusting the practicum experience (e.g. assigning the trainee to different classes or leading them to reflect on their perspective on teaching), the faculty teacher and practicum supervisor should make sure the trainee experiences this shift in their

perspective on teaching during the practicum. Third, even though Veronika was provided with little encouragement towards reflection on her own performance, she seemed to have successfully developed her own teacher identity. Follow-up study could be conducted that would assess the role of the teaching journal and whether it might compensate the lack of guided reflection.

### **4.3 Novice Teacher C: Petr**

Petr makes the first impression of a confident and capable person, which resonated throughout the entire interview. He attended a grammar school specialized in languages and explained that they did not have more lessons of English, but were obliged to follow courses in several languages including Latin. He spent his third year of secondary school at a high school in America and mentioned that he was the best speaker of English in his class. After grammar school, Petr was admitted into the English and American Studies study programme at Charles University, Faculty of Arts and acquired a Master's degree in English philology.

When asked about his former teachers of English, he explained that at secondary school, their teachers changed frequently. The fact that Petr was not exposed to a single model of teaching might have influenced the process of his developing his own teacher identity as his perspective on teaching might not have been bound to a single teacher. Throughout the interview, Petr made no remarks suggesting any similarities of his teaching style to that of the mentioned teachers. He mentioned that their first teacher of English was popular among the pupils, but had old-fashioned English and was not able to keep up with modern trends in TEFL. Petr then added that the teacher was keen on correcting pronunciation and evaluated him as a good teacher. The second teacher he mentioned was a teacher without education for teaching English and he dismissed the inquiry about her teaching by saying that she could neither speak nor teach English. Petr then proceeded to say that the last teacher of English he encountered at secondary school did not enjoy teaching English, used mostly textbook-based lessons and was not able to deliver compelling or interesting lessons. What is interesting about Petr's description of his former teachers is that he seemed to consider them not as models of what a teacher is supposed to be, but as models of what a teacher is not supposed to be. When Petr described his own teaching style later on, he mentioned that he tries very hard

to stay up-to-date with latest research and wants to implement new methods, which is in direct opposition to what he was exposed to at secondary school.

Petr's experience with teaching before the practicum included teaching one-to-one classes and two years of co-operation with a language school, where he taught groups of 6-7 students. He emphasized that this experience was most beneficial for his career and that he based his teaching on what he had learned while working in the language school and not on the knowledge acquired during the teaching practicum.

*V době, kdy jsem v roce 2016 začal učit na gymnáziu, tak jsem čerpal především z toho, co jsem se naučil v tý jazykovce, protože kdybych měl čerpat z toho, co jsem se naučil během tý praxe, co jsem měl na gymnáziu, tak bych asi teď absolutně netušil, jak mám učit.*

Currently Petr has one-year teaching experience at a grammar school in Prague and works as a senior lecturer at a different language school. His responsibilities as a senior lecturer include observing and providing feedback to other teachers.

Petr underwent his teaching practicum at a grammar school recommended to him by one of his classmates. He exchanged e-mails with the faculty teacher and informed the practicum supervisor that he was to start his practicum there. At this point, Petr first expressed his opinion that what he finds wrong about the practicum process is that the trainees are given too much independence. He mentioned that he lacked more supervision and guidance.

Before he started the teaching period of his practicum, Petr observed only 4 classes and was given no instructions on what is the aim of the observations or what he should do. He evaluated the faculty teacher as a good teacher, saying that her style of teaching was similar to what was taught at his TEFL seminar. During the interview, Petr seemed to have a clear idea about the importance of observations in teacher training, which he probably developed in his position of the senior lecturer and expressed that he would have appreciated more guidance during the observation period. He taught 18 lessons and was allowed to make his own schedule and decide on the day and time of his lessons.



When asked about feedback, Petr claimed that he was given no feedback as his performance was always evaluated as perfect. Even though Petr previously evaluated the faculty teacher as a good teacher, he was still given very little feedback on his performance. This highlights the difference between being a good teacher and being a good supervisor. Petr perceived his practicum experience as useless for his teaching career, which might have been contributed to by the total absence of reflective feedback. This supports the importance of pre-schooled faculty teachers for the efficiency of the teaching practicum.

*Můj feedback by takovej, že jsem vlastně ani žádnéj nedostal. Ta učitelka mi vždycky akorát řekla, že to bylo super a tak. Ale bylo to myslim tím, že jsem měl zkušenosti z jazykovky.*

Petr claimed that in general, the teaching practicum was a pleasant and comfortable experience. He mentioned no negative emotions or problems and explained that the practicum was very smooth and relaxed, but it was of little use to him. Petr's account of his experience made the impression that due to the freedom he was given, he experienced only very little stress and had no opportunity to familiarize himself with the reality of full-time teaching. Petr explained that he thinks the current model of the teaching practicum offered in the lifelong learning programme should change dramatically. What he emphasized was that it should include more practice lessons, and more guidance and supervision should be provided to the students.

*Já myslim, že celkově by bylo potřeba změnit ten systém. Protože momentálně to funguje tak, že prostě ty si vybereš nějakou školu, jako nikdo neví, co to je za školu, klidně můžeš jít do nějaký horní dolní a odučíš si tam co chceš. Podepíše ti to každej ten papír a ten feedback je takovej, jaký je – ten můj nebyl žádnéj prakticky.*

When talking about the beginnings of his career, he mentioned that it was incredibly difficult for him and that he felt overwhelmed by the amount of responsibilities. Petr's case however, is specific in that the beginning of his full-time teaching career overlapped with his Master's degree examination. However, he mentioned that what he found most stressful was that he felt completely unprepared and had no idea what was expected from him. At this point, he also mentioned that he experienced the same feeling he had during his practicum, which was that

he felt nervous before coming to every class. Petr added that he had trouble getting accustomed to the advanced level of English of his students and that he struggled when making lesson plans as he was not sure what activities to include.

*Pro mě to tenkrát bylo strašně náročný, protože ty první dny jsem měl obrovskéj stress z tý nový práce a zároveň ještě z těch státnic. Bylo to hodně hektický, ale bylo to pro mě náročný z toho hlediska, že všechno to bylo nový, celá ta škola, kolegové, student, jak to tam vlastně funguje, nic jsem vlastně nevěděl. Byl jsem tam hozenej jak ryba do vody.*

At the end of the interview, Petr explained that over the years of his teaching experience, his perspective on teaching evolved mostly in that he gained confidence in his own performance. He mentioned that it was primarily due to his own effort such as work on his thesis, attendance at TEFL conferences and cooperation with the language school. During the interview, he made several remarks that suggested that Petr is a content teacher and expressed no intention of leaving the profession. He claimed that teaching for him is a never-ending process of learning and that he would like to develop his teaching skill more in the future and stay up-to-date with latest methodological progress.

Petr's case implies three suggestions for the teaching practicum. First, Petr's description of his teaching style exhibited no similarities with the teaching style of his former teachers, which suggests that he managed to develop his own teacher identity. This process may have been facilitated by not being exposed to a single model of teaching but rather to more short-term exposures to different teachers. Practicum supervisors and faculty teachers should be able to assess the degree to which the trainee is influenced by his former experience as a student and they should ensure that the trainee leaves the practicum with his own identity as a teacher. Second, the faculty teacher and practicum supervisor should communicate on the amount and manner of feedback given to the student. If the faculty teacher is not capable of providing the trainee with more feedback, consultations with the practicum supervisor should be arranged to make sure that the trainee is informed about possible ways of further development. Third, Petr explained that what he found most difficult when starting his career was getting accustomed to all teacher responsibilities at once. Post-graduate part-time internships, similar to the German preparatory service, would bridge the gap between the teaching practicum and full-time teaching.

#### **4.4 Novice teacher D: Jana**

Jana proved to be one of the most complex case studies included in this study. Although her pre-practicum experience was extensive, she experienced the beginning of her full-time teaching harder than most of other interviewed teachers and shortly after she started her first full-time job, she underwent what she described as an intensive burnout.

Similarly to other interviewed novice teachers, Jana attended a general education grammar school. English was her fourth language and she previously learned German and French. She started learning English in the third year of lower secondary school and explained that at secondary school, she was taught by many teachers. Jana herself claimed that the most influential teacher she had was a native speaker who gave her private conversational lessons. She emphasized that she was not a good teacher methodologically, but she was able to spark her interest in English. Towards the end of the interview, Jana described her perspective on teaching as motivating students towards learning and, therefore, this teacher probably influenced her perspective on teaching.

Immediately after graduating from grammar school, Jana was offered to cover for an English teacher at a primary school. It should be noted that this was immediately after her school-leaving exam, three months before she commenced her university studies. This included full-time teaching, which means that in that month she taught 20 lessons a week. Her classes included years 4-9. Jana's reflections on that experience might be distorted by the long time that had passed, but she claimed that it was very positive and that it was what motivated her to go into the teaching career. She added that she used to be more confident than she is now and reflected on that teaching experience by saying that now she can see that she made a lot of mistakes that she was not aware of.

Jana then entered the English and American studies programme at Charles University, Faculty of Arts, where her interest in teaching developed. During her studies, she taught one-to-one classes and cooperated with a language school<sup>19</sup>. In the second year of her Master's studies she started working as a part-time teacher at her former grammar school. Jana explained,

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<sup>19</sup> Amount of people and lessons taught was not specified.

however, that she only taught conversation classes and she did not consider that actual teaching. That was also the reason why she wanted to undergo practical training even though she was already working at a grammar school.

*Já jsem sama chtěla si tu praxi splnit, protože v době, kdy jsem studovala, tak jsem vlastně učila jenom tu konverzaci, což je takový dost specifický. Takže jsem si sama chtěla zkusit tu obecnou angličtinu a chtěla jsem, aby tam se mnou někdo byl a něco mi řekl.*

During her studies, Jana completed the teacher training programme offered within lifelong learning. She also gave guitar classes to groups of children (10 children in one group) and admitted that it might have been useful for her in that she knew how to manage children, but she was not aware of taking anything from it pedagogically. After acquiring her Master's degree she worked for two years as a full-time teacher at her former grammar school and she spent last year teaching at a grammar school in Prague.

Jana pointed out that the admission process to her current job was very difficult for her as it included providing the employer not only with her curriculum vitae and a cover letter, but also with her teacher portfolio. All interviewed novice teachers described the selection procedure used by the employers in a different way. For some selection included only positive references or no criteria at all. It is important that the teaching practicum trains the trainees for all possible selection procedures used by potential employers. Incorporating portfolio work in the teaching practicum could not only help the trainees to reflect on their performance, but also to start taking control of their professional development. For more details on the importance of the teacher portfolio, see chapter 2.1.2.

Jana underwent her teaching practicum at her former grammar school. She contacted one of the English teachers and then informed the faculty that she was to commence her practicum there. The practicum included 4 observations in one day and teaching in three classes for two weeks. Jana claimed that the beginning of her practicum was shocking for her, primarily because she could not get accustomed to teaching lessons of 45 minutes instead of 90.

*Byl to takovej hroznej šok v tom, že jsem musela učit 45 minut. Když jsem učila v jazykovce 90 minut, nebyly tam takový věci jako donést magneták, musím zapsat*

*do třídnice, někdo po mně něco chce. Narvat to do těch 45 minut, to bylo prostě neskutečný. Připravila jsem si spoustu aktivit a pak jsem udělala třeba dvě. Nečekala jsem, že ty děti budou tak pomalý, nebo jsem nečekala, že ty děti budou naopak rychlý a pak jsem neměla co dělat. Musela jsem hodně improvizovat.*

When describing the observations preceding the teaching period of her practicum, Jana highlighted that the four lessons were not sufficient for her and she sought more opportunities to observe other teachers. However, other teachers were reluctant to let her observe as they were afraid Jana was going to evaluate their performance. She also added that she found strange that the teachers who allowed her to observe wanted her to give them approval of their performance. The same problem reappeared in Case Study F: Edita and is discussed in more detail below in chapter 4.6. Similarly to other interviewed teachers, Jana was given no instructions on the observations.

When asked about feedback that she was given during her practicum, Jana explained that after each lesson, the faculty teacher highlighted the strengths and weaknesses of her performance, but provided her with no guidance on how to work on her weaknesses. From Jana's account, the feedback she was given was deficient and suggested incompetency from the side of the faculty teacher.

*Myslim si, že se mi fakultní učitelka nevěnovala tolik, jak by mohla. Byla by jsem potřebovala konkrétnější feedback a další věc, která mě překvapila bylo, že když jsem se zeptala, jak by třeba ta učitelka řešila ten nebo jakej problém, tak mi řekla: "No já vlastně taky nevím, to je těžký."*

Overall, Jana described her teaching practicum as an ephemeral experience. She explained that teaching during practicum is immensely different from a full-time teaching job in that the reality is different when one teaches for two weeks and when one commences a real teaching job. She highlighted that what she found worst about her practicum was that she could not experience examinations – later when she started her full-time job, she had difficulties with structuring and evaluating tests. She added that the practicum helped her realize a lot of things such as the necessity of time-management skills and that there are a lot of responsibilities connected to the profession besides teaching. However, at the same time Jana emphasized that she did not find the practicum helpful. She explained that she finds it important to be in one

class for a longer period of time and without that, the reality of teaching cannot be rehearsed. She followed that thought by saying that each practicum should be accompanied by a seminar where the trainees would share and reflect on their performances and also where they would rehearse problematic situations.

*Mně přišlo, že tam bylo spoustu věcí o speciálních případech jako poruchy učení - když dostanu dítě s dyslexií, dostanu spoustu podpůrných materiálů, ale nikdo ti neřekne, co máš dělat, když ti dítě řekne: já tohle dělat nebudu.*

When Jana completed her Master's studies, she got a full-time job at a grammar school in Hořovice. Without any prompting, Jana immediately started to describe what is in this thesis repeatedly referred to as reality shock. She admitted that the beginnings of her career were incredibly difficult and that she had imagined it very differently. She expressed that she felt overwhelmed and exhausted. According to her account, it took Jana six months to be able to start living again and explains that during those six months she had no time to do anything else but work and sleep. Being under such pressure led to her experiencing occupational burnout after six months. In her opinion, the burnout was caused by her illusions that she struggled to hold on to for as long as possible. She explained that when she started her career, she thought that she could reach all students and wanted to be able to teach all pupils by any means necessary. She added that she saw the pupils' failures and successes as her own. It was not until the next school year that Jana was able to rebound from that experience. At that point, she came to terms with not being able to teach everybody and she also implemented some rules such as leaving all responsibilities in the office or not planning tests for all groups at the same time. She admitted that this is something that every teacher needs to experience themselves and that being given advice alone did not help her. However, she added that she would have appreciated being able to experience this during the practicum when she had someone to whom she could come for help.

*Po půl roce jsem zažila úplný vyhoření a když jsem se měla po roce vrátit zpátky, tak jsem v září, když to řeknu upřímně, prostě brečela, že tam nechci. Že nechci zpátky, že nechci už jen to vyčerpání, že nechci každý den mluvit se sto lidma, že nechci dalších patnáct dětí, co se na mě psychicky navážou. I když ten vztah s těma studentama je kladnej, je to pořád nějaký emocionální vztah. V tom druhým roce už jsem byla schopná si nastavit nějaký mantinely.*

Jana's case was specific in that no other interviewed teacher described their reality shock this intensively. What is significant about her experience is that she had most pre-practicum experience of all the teachers. This suggests that practical experience alone does not mean the student experiences the reality shock. That seems to be triggered by a mix of more factors such as amount of responsibilities, teacher's perspective on teaching, longitudinal character of full-time employment. The reality triggering the reality shock might vary for each trainee and it should be the duty of other participants in the practicum, namely the faculty teacher and the practicum supervisor, to adjust the practicum experience so that no trainee leaves the practicum with illusions about teaching and assumes a healthy approach towards teaching. The subjectivity of the experience excludes the possibility of a universal solution. While some trainees might have to be exposed to all responsibilities of the full-time employment, others might reach the reality shift by intense reflection. The teaching practicum should be accompanied by a reflective seminar led by the practicum supervisor. Not only would that give the trainees more opportunities to reflect, but it would also give the practicum supervisor an opportunity to connect with their trainees and be involved in the practicum process without having to spend time with all trainees individually, which might be too time-consuming.

#### **4.5 Novice teacher E: Lenka**

Unlike other interviewed teachers, Lenka graduated from the Faculty of Education at the University of South Bohemia. As has been described in the theoretical part of this thesis, the practicum model used there is different from the one used within the lifelong learning programme. The original intention was to include Lenka in the study to compare her practicum experience with that of other interviewed teachers. However, during the interview, Lenka explained that her core teaching practicum (*souvislá praxe*) was credited for her experience with teaching at a language school and therefore she only underwent the preparatory practicum (*průběžná praxe*). After careful consideration, the case was included in this study nonetheless as Lenka's account provides important insight into some of the topics discussed in this thesis.

Before her university studies, Lenka attended a general education grammar school in České Budějovice. Her description of her former teachers of English was similar to Petr's as she mentioned that their teachers changed very often and she was exposed to many teaching

styles. Lenka emphasized, that one teacher was particularly bad and the class eventually voted to have him substituted for a more suitable teacher. She explained that while he tried to include entertaining activities and had all lessons well prepared, the pupils felt that his lessons are too easy for them, that they were not tested often enough and could not see their progress. Another feature of Lenka's account, which was similar to Petr's, was that when she described her own teaching style, it did not seem to resemble any qualities of her former teachers, but their opposites, which supports the claim that if teachers are not exposed to a single quality teaching style, they tend to develop a teaching style opposite to the negative ones they have encountered. The discussion of this influence is, however, beyond the scope of this thesis and further research should be done into its validity as well as its influence on the development of teacher identity.

Having completed her secondary school studies, Lenka commenced her university studies at the Faculty of Education at the University of South Bohemia. She entered a teacher training programme for lower secondary school teachers (*Učitelství Aj-Fj pro 2. stupeň základních škol*). She claimed that before she began her university studies, she never thought about being a teacher. When asked about her motivation to enter the Faculty of Education, she said that she liked languages, had no finances to study outside her hometown and she considered education in teaching more marketable than other potential study programmes. Motivation to enter the teaching career might be an influential factor in the intensity of reality shock and its impact on novice teachers during the beginning of their career, which is discussed in more detail in the concluding paragraph of this case study.

Lenka's pre-practicum experience included teaching one-to-one classes, and teaching groups of 8-10 children aged 10-15 at a language school. She added that the language school was very good and gave her a lot of useful experience in class management and lesson planning. She also said that this experience motivated her decision to teach children at lower secondary school.

When asked about her teaching practicum, Lenka admitted that she only experienced the introductory practicum. She described that the trainees were divided into groups of 8-10 people and in those groups, they regularly attended a school selected for them by the faculty. The practicum included two hours of observations supervised by the practicum supervisor. After the two observed lessons the group came to the same lesson every week and took turns



in teaching. Before each lesson, the practicum supervisor consulted with the trainee who was to teach the lesson what material was to be taught. The trainee then had to prepare a lesson plan which they again consulted with the practicum supervisor. Each class was followed by a reflective seminar led by the practicum supervisor where the entire group reflected on the trainee's performance and shared their opinions on the practicum.

Lenka evaluated the practicum as very useful but added that she found it very frustrating to perform in front of other trainees. She mentioned that performing in front of fellow trainees was very frustrating for many of them as they were afraid the other trainees were going to evaluate them and criticize their teaching. Her experience suggests that group practicum can be a powerful tool when designed well and when the trainees are given enough time to get comfortable performing in front of each other, but can also be damaging when this is not the case. Lenka also claimed that while the practicum was designed well, her experience was ruined by the character of the practicum supervisor. She explained that the practicum supervisor did not give them sufficient and useful feedback and that the trainees were only told what they were doing wrong.

*Ta metodička nám vždycky jen zeptala, jak jsme se cítili a zkritizovala naše chyby. Měli jsme strach něco říct, protože byla fakt nepříjemná. Na tý průběžný praxi mi nevadilo učit ani před třema dětma, ani před tou metodičkou, ale bylo mi nepříjemný učit před třema spolužákama.*

After the introductory practicum, Lenka felt that she needed more practical training and decided to register for a vocational assistant practicum (*asistentská praxe*). She explained that she found this experience most useful for her teaching even though she assisted a teacher of French. Lenka claimed that what she found most useful was that she was given more independence, which was different from the introductory practicum where all organizational issues were cared for by the supervisor. However, this might have been caused by the fact that Lenka did not undergo the advanced practicum (*souvislá praxe*), where students are given more independence.

What is very interesting about Lenka's case is her transition into professional teaching career. Having completed her Master's studies, she was offered to teach two lessons a week at her

former grammar school. The following year, Lenka was offered to teach 18 hours a week and the third year she got a full-time employment contract (20 lessons per week). She explained that the beginnings of the first year were chaotic but her account gave the expression that she feels very positively when recounting that experience. She mentioned that she enjoyed it even though she was nervous and had to learn a lot of new things. Lenka then proceeded to say that she only struggled with written examinations and most problems she encountered were related to the school's internal processes.

*Ze začátku jsem byla nervózní, bylo to rozpačité, ale bavilo mě to. Ta výuka pro mě problém nebyl, protože jsem byla naučená z jazykovky, kde mě hodně vedli. Plány jsem plnila, to vycházelo dobře, ale nikdo mi nikdy neřek, jak psát a opravovat testy. Kolik jim mám dát času, co uznat a co neuznat. Všechno jsem si musela zkoušet sama metodou pokus omyl.*

When asked about her feelings at the beginning of the second year, when Lenka started teaching 18 hours per week, she responded that she felt better than the first year. She explained that she felt more confident and that she was already familiar with the school environment, formed relationships with her colleagues and her reputation was already well-established among pupils.

At the end of the interview, Lenka shared that the more she teaches, the more she enjoys teaching. She added that she did not enter the faculty of education with any intention to teach but she reached that decision during her studies after she had gained some experience with teaching. She also mentioned that when she started her career at her former grammar school, she was consumed by teaching and she expressed determination to stay in the profession.

*Čím víc učím, tím víc učit chci. Já jsem nenastoupila na pedák s tím, že chci učit, ale s tím, že chci dělat jazyky. Ale když jsem začala učit, zjistila jsem, že mě to baví a že asi fakt chci učit, což se mi pak potvrdilo v tý jazykovce s těma dětma. Jak jsem nastoupila na Bigy [gymnázium], tak to mě úplně pohltilo a věděla jsem, že s těma dětma jako chci bejt. Takže jsem se jako našla.*

Above all, Lenka's case emphasizes the role of part-time internships preceding a full-time teaching career. By teaching two lessons per week at the same institution, where she later commenced her full-time teaching career, Lenka was given an opportunity to familiarize

herself with the school's internal processes and form relationships which facilitated her experience in the next year. Moreover, it also illustrated that group practicum may be damaging for the trainees as they feel anxious performing in front of other students and that may negatively impact the efficiency of the practice lessons.

#### **4.6 Novice teacher F: Edita**

Edita responded to the e-mail sent to all 17 teachers saying that she would like to take part in the study as she spent two years teaching at a grammar school in Prague. Immediately after meeting her, I was informed that she did not undergo the teaching practicum during her studies, but she would like to share her experience nonetheless. The interview started in a standard way and after several minutes, I decided to include her experience in this research as it contrasted strongly with the experience of all other teachers included. The theoretical part of this chapter emphasised the importance of practical training, which is illustrated in this case study.

Edita attended a general education grammar school. She evaluated her teacher of English as a good teacher. She explained that he was strict but he taught them a lot and highlighted his methodological skills. She admitted that he was young and therefore was able to establish good rapport with the students as he was interested in similar things. When Edita was later talking about her style of teaching, she mentioned a lot of the same characteristics and it was clear that this teacher made a significant impact on her perspective on teaching.

Having finished grammar school, Edita entered the English and American studies programme at Charles University, Faculty of Arts where she acquired her Bachelor's degree. Instead of English philology, Edita then selected English literature for her Master's studies. After that, she commenced her Ph.D. studies at the Department of Anglophone Literatures and Cultures, during which she spent two years teaching at her former grammar school. She claims that her motivation for teaching was rooted in the fact that her studies included mostly sitting in front of a computer and she sought social contact. During her MA studies, she started pedagogical education in the lifelong learning programme, but only completed few subjects and underwent no practical training.

*Říkala jsem si, že učení bude taková dobrá protiváha k tomu, jak pořád sedíš u počítače a něco jako děláš sám, jako že budeš mít nějakou interakci a že by mě to jako mohlo bavit, ale nikdy jsem to předtím dělat nechtěla a pořád jsem měla o tom nějaký pochybnosti, ale pak jsem si řekla zkusím to, mám nějaký kamarády, kterým se to líbí, tak to třeba bude fajn.*

Edita claimed that during her studies, she felt that she cannot use what is being taught in theoretical seminars in her own classes. She explained that while she found the theory interesting, she could hardly imagine most of the activities working for her students. She admitted, however, that it might be due to the character of the groups she taught as she taught mostly passive students. What she found most useful during her theoretical teacher training seminars was a microteaching session she was required to undergo. She found it very useful to watch her own teaching as it helped her to reflect on her own teaching and made her aware of mistakes she was not aware of making while teaching. However, she mentioned that the experience was very stressful for her as she found it difficult to perform in front of her classmates and she claimed that her performance would have been better had she been teaching a group of strangers.

Edita's former teaching experience includes teaching one-to-one lessons during her BA studies and later she taught a group of 8-10 senior citizens aged 60-80. She reflected on that experience by saying that there were some issues related to age and she did not take much out of it pedagogically. What was important about that experience is, however, that the entire group was co-operative and she did not have to deal with any problematic students, which she could have benefited from later during her teaching career. She also worked for a month as an assistant to a native speaker at a summer camp for children. However, she explained that the only thing she was aware of learning from that experience was how to approach younger children and how to capture their attention and interest.

Throughout the entire interview, Edita consistently demonstrated lack of confidence in her teaching. As a person, she did not seem like an introvert and lack of confidence did not seem to be a part of her character. Lack of confidence resurfaced when she described the job interview for her teaching position at the grammar school in Prague. When asked by the headmaster about the strengths of her teaching, she felt very confused and did not know what to say. After a period of hesitation, she highlighted her language proficiency and experience

with different age groups. She explained that she got the job nonetheless as the school was in need of teachers of English.

*Šla jsem za ředitelem, kterej mi řek předtim po telefonu, že mi chce předeštrít, co mi chce jako nabídnout, takže to bylo takový jako, nevím. Zeptal se mě, jestli jsem připravená, tak jsem řekla: 'Hm, nevím, asi jo.' Pak se mě zeptal: 'Proč myslíš, že budeš dobrá učitelka,' tak jsem neveděla vůbec co odpovědět a řekla jsem, že si myslím, že umím dobře anglicky a že mám jako zkušenost s různějma sociálníma skupinama.*

Edita described the beginning of her full-time teaching position as a horrible experience. She mentioned that she had a lot of problematic students and had no idea what to do with them. She explained that she felt more like their friend than teacher and that she felt very bad when she had to exert authority over them. Edita then moved on to describe that she felt inadequately prepared methodologically. She explained that she did not know how she should teach vocabulary and what activities to include. She expressed that she was not able to evaluate her own performance and was not sure whether her teaching was useful or damaging for the students. She said that her only proof that her teaching was not bad was that there were no complaints from the students.

On being asked whether she was given an opportunity to observe classes of English before her first day of teaching, Edita mentioned that she was allowed to observe one class, but she was given no instructions on what is the aim of the observations, which she found frustrating. As Edita was not sure about her own performance, she relied on observing her colleagues to extend her knowledge of methodology. She explained that she observed in her office how other teachers worked with textbooks, how they structured and assessed tests, or how they revised material with pupils. She said that she wanted to conduct more observations, but her colleagues were reluctant to let her observe as they found it inconvenient for them in that they felt she was going to evaluate them. Edita admitted that she felt helpless for a long period of time. Her confidence in her performance was not boosted until the first parents' meeting in December when she was given positive feedback from the pupils' parents.

*První měsíc byl hrozej, byla jsem z toho po každý tý hodině špatná. Měla jsem vždycky pocit, že to dělám úplně blbě. Pak si pamatuju, že byly v prosinci třídní*

*schůzky a to jsem si říkala, že už to nějak tak zvládám a přišli za mnou nějaký ty rodiče, že si to ty děti jako chválej. Tak jsem nevěděla, co si na tom jako chválej, jestli mě, jako že nejsem debil úplnej, nebo reálně ty hodiny.*

Upon commencing her teaching career, Edita only had one supervised lesson. The supervisor was a teacher who could not speak English and Edita mentions that the only feedback was that she was given advice on how to deal with problematic pupils, but the advice proved useless. The only other feedback given to her were letters from her pupils that she requested them to write. The fact that this feedback was positive gave her more confidence and helped her feel better about her performance.

Edita's teaching career ended after two years when she decided to go into a different profession. She taught for two school years, but she taught only four months of the second year as she went abroad because of responsibilities related to her Ph.D. studies. On being asked why she quit her teaching position, Edita explained that she realized that she does not have a personality suitable for teaching and that she found it frustrating to permanently tell people what to do. She mentioned that she had hoped that at a grammar school she would not have to force pupils to learn but the reality was very different from what she had imagined. Another reason was that she found the amount of responsibilities and stress connected to teaching overwhelming and could not cope with that.

*Docela záhy mi došlo, že to vlastně není pro mě. A že já jsem třeba měla všechny ty studenty hrozně ráda, vždycky jsem si říkala, že kdybychom mohli být kamarádi, bylo by to fajn, štválo mě jim pořád říkat, co mají dělat. Taký mi začalo připadat, že je to pro mě ubíjející. Začlo mi hrozně vadit, že u toho učení nemůžu přijít z práce a mít volno, u toho učení tohle není.*

Edita's case illustrates the necessity of practical training in the teacher training process. Above all, it emphasizes, how important it is for novice teachers to have experienced the reality shock during their training. When she started her teaching career, Edita discovered that the reality of being a grammar school teacher is very different from what she had imagined and she had to come to terms with the new reality on her own without any guidance. This experience may be very difficult and stressful for the teacher and may lead the novice teacher to conclude their teaching studies early. The fact that Edita was given positive feedback from

both pupils and parents proves that her teaching was much better than she thought it was. Developing a complete teacher identity during the training process gives the teachers confidence in their own performance, which in turn reduces the amount of stress they experience when they enter their first full-time teaching position. Moreover, Edita described her perspective on teaching very similarly to that of her secondary school teacher of English. Chapter 2.1.4 included Farrell's assertion that by being led to frequently reflect on their performance, the students develop their own teacher identity and thus step out of their former teachers' shadow. Edita's case study confirms this claim and demonstrates that without guidance and reflection, the novice teacher builds his own teaching on the teaching they experienced as a student without knowing exactly why they are doing what they are doing.

This case study is also included reflections on the process of observations. Edita highlighted the role of observations in teacher training and expressed that observations should be structured with clear instructions given to the trainees. Moreover, she illustrated that observations are often perceived negatively by the model teachers. This stems from the fact that they perceive it more as evaluation. Being reluctant to let a novice teacher observe often stems from insecurity about one's own performance. Discussion of experienced teachers and their approach to observations is beyond the scope of this thesis, however, this case has implications for the teaching practicum as it emphasizes the role of model teachers in observations. Hiring pre-schooled faculty teachers who would be trained in supervising trainees would ensure that quality model lessons would be available to all teacher trainees

When discussing the topic of peer observations, Edita expressed negative emotions as she finds performing in front of other pupils stressful. This might be the case for more teachers and that suggests that peer observations could be a useful tool in teacher training but only once the participants get comfortable performing in front of each other.

## 5 Conclusion

The theoretical part of this thesis analysed the role of practicum in the teacher training process. It described the roles of individual participants, the importance of feedback and discussed how the practicum length may influence its efficiency. Three different practicum models used in Finland, Germany and Belgium were then described as possible sources for improvement. Based on the theoretical part, the recommendations were outlined that might improve the quality of the teaching practicum in the teacher training process (for more details see Chapter 2.5.4).

The practical part presented six case studies of novice teachers of English, their practicum experience and the beginnings of their teaching career. Although each case study had its idiosyncrasies due to the subjective nature of the case studies, recurrent topics emerged in the novice teachers' accounts. These topics represent problematic areas of the current practicum model and the conclusion of this thesis proposes possible solutions. The following recurrent topics appeared in the case studies and are discussed in more details below:

- a) Length
- b) Observations
- c) Faculty teachers
- d) Lack of reflection
- e) Feedback
- f) Reality shock

Based on the case studies the current length of the teaching practicum seems to be inadequate. All interviewed teachers trained within the lifelong learning programme agreed that they would have appreciated longer periods of practical training. Veronika's case illustrated that longer teaching practicum gives the trainee more time to gain confidence in their teaching, which may facilitate the transition into full-time teaching. Furthermore, longer exposure to the everyday reality of the school environment and the teaching profession provides the students with a frame of reference to the skill they are building and might mitigate the risk of premature occupational burnout in the future. The solution proposed is based on the Finnish practicum model and suggests that practical training should begin as soon as possible and that semester-long periods of practicum should be incorporated into the study programme at rate of at least three semesters.



Furthermore, longer periods of practicum allow for more observations to be conducted. The importance of observations for the teacher training process was discussed in Chapter 2.1.3. Above all, they serve as important sources of inspiration and may trigger reflections on one's own teaching. Three of the six interviewed teachers recounted that they were discontent with how observations were conducted during their practicum and two teachers mentioned that when they sought more observations, other teachers were reluctant to let them observe. The author of this thesis suggests two measures for better efficiency of observations in the teaching practicum. First, observations should be conducted throughout the entire practicum period, which gives the trainees an opportunity to observe how other teachers cope with problems that the trainees encounter while teaching. Second, all trainees need to be informed by the faculty teacher or practicum supervisor about the goal of the observation and about what they are expected to do while observing. This is directly related to the competency of faculty teachers, which is discussed in the following paragraph.

The importance of the faculty teacher's role in the teaching practicum was discussed in Chapter 2.1.1. In the current practicum model, the faculty teacher acts as a sole guide and instructor to the trainee. All presented case studies included suggestions that the supervision provided to the trainees by the faculty teachers was not adequate. In most cases, the trainees claimed that they received only very little feedback, if any. In the Finnish and Belgian practicum model, faculty teachers need to be pre-approved to be allowed to supervise trainees. Including a selection process for the faculty teachers ensures that all trainees are supervised by a competent faculty teacher acquainted with his responsibilities. This solution, however, would work only if the faculty schools were organically linked to the faculties where teachers are trained. However, the Belgian model used in the Flemish community is inspiring in that preceding the teaching practicum, the practicum supervisor and the faculty teacher negotiate the terms of the practicum, which allows the practicum supervisor to provide the faculty teacher with instructions on how they are to supervise the teachers.

The presented case studies demonstrated that all the trainees were given insufficient feedback. Reflective feedback is essential for the efficiency of the teaching practicum, for the trainee's development of their teacher identity and for leading them to assume a healthy perspective on teaching, which mitigates the damage of reality shock at the beginning of their career. Securing that all faculty teachers are schooled in encouraging trainees to reflect is

organizationally impossible and, therefore, it is crucial that all periods of practicum are accompanied by reflection seminars. Not only would the trainees be given more room for development of their teacher identity and led to understand their experience, but the practicum supervisor would also gain more room to enter the practicum process and provide the trainees with more guidance which they were in this thesis found to lack from faculty teachers.

The reality shock is a feeling of disillusionment stemming from the discrepancy between expected reality and the actual reality of being a teacher. Each novice teacher experiences the shock differently and for some, it may lead to an early end of their teaching career. One of the main goals of the teaching practicum is to prepare the trainees for the reality of teaching, yet in the case studies included, this was rarely the case. Five of the six interviewed novice teachers admitted that they struggled when they started their teaching career with Lenka's case being the only exception. Veronika's and Jana's cases illustrated that the length or amount of lessons taught are not enough to secure that the trainee embraces the new reality. Based on the presented case studies, the factors contributing to this reality shock seem to be length of the practicum, number of lessons taught, amount of reflection during the practicum, and motivation to enter the teaching career. There are several possible reasons why Lenka did not experience the beginning of her career as hardly as other novice teachers. First, she decided to become a teacher only once she started teaching and thus her decision was based on teaching experience instead of presumed a priori reality of being a teacher. Second, all her periods of practicum were accompanied by reflective seminars, where she could reflect on the observed and experienced classes. Third, her transition into her teaching career was gradual, which means that she assumed the new responsibilities of being a full-time teacher progressively.

In conclusion, the case studies confirmed the need for implementing the recommendations previewed at the end of the theoretical part of this thesis. The recommendations were confirmed in their entirety and are presented again below:

1) Practical training should include at least three semesters of practical training progressing from observations through teaching in groups towards independent teaching. Longer exposure to the everyday reality of the school environment and the teaching profession provides the students with a frame of reference to the skill they are building and might mitigate the risk of premature occupational burnout in the future. This should be incorporated into the lifelong

learning programme for teachers in order to secure practical training of sufficient length for all aspiring teachers, not only students of faculties of education.

2) Manner and form of feedback to teacher trainees should be standardized so that all student teachers acquire well-formed reflective abilities and get the chance to discuss their experience with fellow students and experienced professionals. Each period of practical training should be accompanied by a reflective seminar and some form of written communication should be secured between the faculty school and the university so that each faculty teacher receives sufficient instructions on the form and amount of feedback they are to provide the student with.

3) School heads should offer part-time jobs or internships for graduates. Similar to the model of the preparatory service in Germany, aspiring teachers would benefit greatly from a chance to ease into the transition from being a student to being a teacher. Being able to have enough time to learn the in-and-outs of the particular school where the novice teacher starts their career is beneficial not only for the novice teachers as it reduces the amount of stress, but also for the pupils as the teacher can focus more on their performance and, furthermore, for the school heads as well as satisfied teachers are more likely to last.

Several limitations had to be considered during the research presented in this thesis. First, the description of models used in Finland, Germany, and Belgium is based exclusively on secondary literature, which might not reflect possible issues stemming from the practicum model such as differences among individual training schools and faculty teachers. Although it might be organizationally difficult, possible follow-up research should include a contrastive study of novice teachers in the selected countries so that the reliability of the data is reflected in the interviews. Second, the author of this thesis admits, that despite the fact that some problematic areas reoccurred consistently throughout most, or even all, case studies, the research presents subjective accounts of a limited amount of novice teachers. A quantitative research should be done examining the consistency of the findings among a large sample of novice teachers of English trained within the lifelong learning programme.

## Resumé (česky)

Tato diplomová práce se zabývá problematikou povinné pedagogické praxe a její rolí v praktické přípravě učitelů anglického jazyka. Práce pojímá pedagogickou praxi z pohledu didaktiky, tedy jako nástroj používaný za účelem připravit učitele na jejich budoucí kariéru. Teoretická část rozebírá na základě sekundární literatury, jakou roli povinná pedagogická praxe hraje a jací účastníci do ní vstupují. Dále rozebírá vliv jednotlivých účastníků na průběh a efektivitu praxe. Následně jsou rozebrány jednotlivé přístupy k povinné pedagogické praxi v České republice a v zemích, které jsou známy vynikající úrovní anglického jazyka mezi obyvateli, což je základem pro předpoklad, že tyto země mají efektivní přípravu učitelů. Tyto země zahrnují Finsko, Německo a Belgie. Nejdůležitější poznatky o těchto modelech zahrnují následující závěry:

Ve finském modelu je kladen důraz na brzký začátek praktické přípravy učitelů, a proto praxe ve většině případů probíhá již od prvního semestru. Praxe je součástí studijního plánu po celou dobu učitelského studia a je vždy doprovázena reflektivním seminářem, kde studenti rozebírají a reflektují na své zkušenosti. Finský model praxí kombinuje náslechy s učením, přičemž je studentům postupně dáвана větší míra samostatnosti. Veškerá příprava učitelů probíhá na pedagogických fakultách a je realizována v institucích, které jsou administrativně spojeny s těmito fakultami. To dává pedagogickým fakultám možnost dohlížet na průběh jednotlivých praxí a na kvalitu fakultních učitelů.

Německý model praktické přípravy učitelů probíhá ve dvou fázích. První fází je povinná pedagogická praxe během studia. Během této praxe probíhá výuka jednou týdně po dobu 12 měsíců, kdy je student po každé hodině fakultním učitelem veden k reflexi. Získání magisterského titulu opravňuje studenta začít praktickou přípravu na instituci, pro kterou byl kvalifikován. Během této přípravy dostává učitel plat úměrný začínajícímu učitelskému platu a je veden dvěma zkušenými učiteli a ředitelem dané instituce. Praktická příprava trvá rok až dva a je rozdělena do dvou částí – úvodní a souvislé. Během úvodní části se student účastní 120 hodin náslechu a vyučuje 80 hodin během šesti měsíců. Souběžně začínající učitel dochází na teoretický seminář, který zahrnuje výuku metodologie, legislativy a plánování. Teoretický seminář probíhá i během souvislé části, kdy učitel učí 10-12 hodin týdně. Na konci souvislé části učitel skládá druhou státní zkoušku, která ho kvalifikuje pro zaměstnání učitele.

Model praktické přípravy učitelů používaný v Belgii se liší pro studenty pedagogických a jiných fakult. Na pedagogických fakultách je praxe rozdělena do tří let při vzrůstající intenzitě. Studenti jiných fakult se účastní pěti hodin násllechů, pěti hodin cvičných hodin a 35 hodin samostatného učení. Během praxe je studentům poskytována zpětná vazba od vedoucího praxe a dalšího akademického pracovníka, který zodpovídá za teoretickou přípravu. Fakultní učitelé musejí být schválení fakultou a jsou za vedení studentů na praxi placeni.

Na základě teoretické části byly nastíněny tři závěry ohledně povinné pedagogické praxe. Za první, delší průběh praxe studentům umožní studentům vytvořit si reálnou představu o profesi, pro kterou jsou připravováni a to může snížit riziko syndromu vyhoření na počátku jejich budoucí kariéry. Za druhé, souběžně s každou pedagogickou praxí by měl probíhat reflektivní seminář, kde by studenti mohli reflektovat na své zkušenosti pod vedením odborníka. Za třetí, pozvolný přechod ze studia do plného úvazku pomocí placených stáží předcházejících plnému úvazku usnadní začínajícím učitelům začátek jejich kariéry a sníží množství stresu, kterému jsou vystaveni. Všechny tyto závěry se následně v praktické části práce potvrdily jako platné.

Praktická část této diplomové práce je založena na kvalitativním výzkumu. Hlavní výzkumnou otázkou bylo, jak začínající učitelé připravováni na Filozofické fakultě Karlovy univerzity hodnotí povinnou pedagogickou praxi a začátky své učitelské kariéry. S ohledem na cíle výzkumu byl zvolen výzkumný design mnohonásobné případové studie. Do případové studie bylo zahrnuto celkem šest začínajících učitelů s profesní zkušeností kratší než 3 roky. Studie zahrnovala pouze začínající učitele, kteří působí na gymnáziích. Pět z těchto šesti učitelů bylo připravováno na Filozofické fakultě Karlovy univerzity a pro srovnání byla zahrnuta i jedna začínající učitelka, která prošla přípravou na Pedagogické fakultě Jihočeské univerzity. Pro porovnání byla do pěti začínajících učitelů z Karlovy univerzity byla zařazena i jedna začínající učitelka, která neabsolvovala povinnou pedagogickou praxi. Cílem případových studií bylo na základě polostrukturovaného rozhovoru zjistit, jak tito začínající učitelé hodnotí svou praktickou přípravu a začátky své kariéry.

Případové studie ukázaly, že všichni oslovení začínající učitelé hodnotí svou praktickou přípravu jako nedostatečnou. Během pohovorů byly opakovaně negativně hodnoceny tyto oblasti povinné pedagogické praxe: délka, násllechy, způsob vedení fakultních učitelů, zpětná vazba, reflexe. Z výpovědí začínajících učitelů vyplývalo, že současný model praktické

přípravy učitelů v rámci programu celoživotního vzdělávání je pro povolání učitele nedostatečný. V závěru této práce autor rozebírá tyto oblasti jednotlivě a navrhuje možnosti, jak současný model praktické přípravy učitelů anglického jazyka upravit.

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